

**THE APOSTOLIC  
LEADERS · · · ·**

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**SANDERS**

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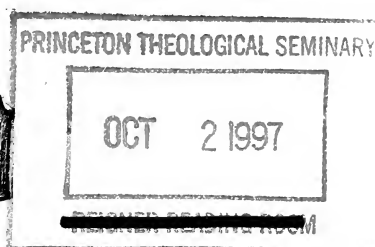
# HISTORICAL NOTES

ON

# THE APOSTOLIC LEADERS

BY

PROFESSOR FRANK K. SANDERS, D.D.



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## PREFACE

These notes were written to accompany the Bible Study Union biographical lessons on the Apostolic Leaders. They were originally published in various weekly papers, and were found so valuable as to warrant their issue in book form for permanent use.

The notes follow the lessons chapter by chapter, but present an interpretation of the origin and development of the Apostolic Church as seen in the lives of its principal founders, rather than an account of its details. They trace the progress of the church from its beginnings in Jerusalem after the ascension of Christ through its extension to Samaria, throughout Palestine and into Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome. In doing this they place its principal incidents and the principal apostolic teachings in their proper historical environment, and reveal their larger meaning. This enables the reader to gain a true historical perspective of these exceedingly interesting events, and thus to understand each lesson in the light of its relation to the development of the apostolic church as a whole. The notes also suggest with more or less fulness the practical application of the lesson truths to the life of to-day.

Considerably more than one half of the entire volume, chapters 14-48 inclusive, is devoted to the life of the great apostle Paul. These chapters present an exceedingly interesting and valuable outline of his life and work. Each epistle is introduced in its proper historical connections, and an outline of its principal contents is given. In this way a flood of light is thrown upon the meaning of the epistles, and also upon the general historical development of the church.

Dr. Sanders' high reputation as a Biblical scholar guarantees that these notes will be found a great aid toward the correct understanding and best use of the Scripture narrative.



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# THE APOSTOLIC LEADERS

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## **Chapter 1. The Humble Beginnings of the Apostolic Church. Scattered References A. D. 27, 28.**

The earliest Christian assemblies centered around the apostles. Without the wise and fearless leadership of these men they could not have been maintained. Their personal testimony gave reality to the new faith; their self-sacrifice and indomitable persistence gave it strength; their noble personalities lifted it into dignity and impressiveness and independence. It is consequently appropriate that the historian of the Christian Church should begin his narrative by tracing the steps by which the several apostles were first brought into continuous personal contact with their beloved Master, to whose friendship, instruction and foresight they attributed every element of greatness ever manifested by them.

It is interesting to notice that Jesus laid hold of them strongly at the very first. There was something about Him when He came from Nazareth to be baptized which attracted men of earnest mind. It is far easier to recognize fine and noble character than to explain the process of recognition. The little group of men who transferred their attention from John the Baptist to Jesus on His return from His sojourn in the wilderness may not have been able to explain the impulse which they obeyed to follow the One whom their master had extolled, but they knew Him at a glance as One of commanding spiritual presence, a natural Leader of serious men. He quickly revealed Himself that day as all conversed together. Their convictions answered to the testimony of John. They believed Him to be the long-awaited Messiah.

That afternoon witnessed the real beginning of Christianity. In these ardent yet thoughtful Jewish patriots

who had rallied to the summons of the prophet of the wilderness, hoping that he would show them what part to take in the work of preparation for the expected Messiah, Jesus found promptly the responsiveness and the quality which gave Him encouragement and confidence. No longer did He stand virtually alone. He



*From a photograph.*

**The River Jordan, near Jericho.**

The place where Peter and John are supposed to have first met Jesus.

became the self-reliant, resourceful, energetic, far-sighted Leader of men.

No less revolutionary a change came over the little group that followed Him from the Jordan to Galilee. Their relations with Him rapidly became more than casual, and although not yet permanent, were yet significantly close, affording to these simple, strong natures an assurance of greater revelations through their continued fellowship. The note of expectancy at least was struck.

The leaders of this group did not fail to appear at the very outset. Peter's rugged strength was unmistakable; John and Andrew were prominent as disciples of the Baptist. It is useless to try to sketch what the Evangelists have failed to record in any way. These disciples were for some time with Jesus. Probably He saw them often at Capernaum before they were taken from their daily toil to follow Him.

One day, however, crowds so pressed upon Him as He walked along the shore of the lake that He stepped into a boat belonging to Peter and from it taught the multitude. When the sermon was finished and the throng had



dispersed, Jesus directed His familiar friends to try their fortune in the lake. With a protest against the useless labor, they do so and are astonished to find a whole boat load of fish. So evidently was this both a testing and a bid for confidence that Peter, the outspoken, put into words their feeling of awe and fealty. They recognized the great difference, as well as the genuine sympathy, between Him and themselves. But He with gracious and winning tenderness explained the parabolic meaning of His action. With His help they were to enter promptly into a higher sphere of activity. They had been catchers of fish; they should become skilful fishers for men.

This was a new and larger definition of the purpose of life. The Jew was not a natural evangelist, except as he sought to raise his fellow-countrymen to a sense of their manifest duty and opportunity. But Jesus from the outset took the ground that repentance, forgiveness and renewed life were terms which applied in full force to His contemporaries in Judea as well as elsewhere. The great purpose of His followers would be to co-operate with Him in the forming of character and the training of personality.

The quick and unreserved response of these men to the call of Jesus shows that they had long since contemplated the possibility of such a summons, and had made up their minds regarding Him. The words of the Gospels can hardly lead to any other conclusion. They had been prepared in some way for self-surrender and for the cheerful exchange of the old set of duties for the new. It was a momentous change. Henceforth their life was lived for the kingdom. The church had truly begun.

The invitation of Jesus is no less for us than it was for them. These earliest members of the Christian church to be represented distinct types of personality. Peter, Andrew and John stood for three sorts of temperament. It is well that they did. They represented more strength and resourcefulness and perseverance than three Peters or three Johns could have assured.

The strength of the church of Christ continues to lie in the fact that it welcomes and uses every sort of value.

We can trace an unbroken chain of development from the twentieth century back to that first day on the banks of the Jordan. Several men merely followed their convictions and yielded to the influence of the noblest personality they had yet known. It could not have seemed of far-reaching importance to them, but the whole history of Christianity began in their spontaneous loyalty to Jesus. Its continued progress is equally dependent on the fidelity of each Christian to such opportunities.

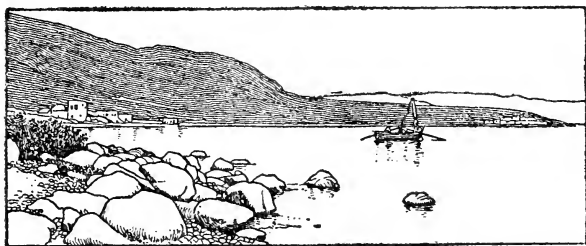
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## **Chapter 2. The Training of the Apostolic Band. Scattered References. A. D. 28-30.**

The varied influences which helped to mould the Twelve into far-seeing, courageous, persistent men of settled convictions and sacrificial spirit, true representatives of Jesus, are in a measure suggested by the narrative of each Gospel regarding their call to permanent service. Jesus had been quietly testing the band of followers who had gathered around Him, and had settled in His own mind whom He would summon. The Gospel of Mark in relating the call lays emphasis upon the need of companionship and service, "that they might be with Him and that He might send them forth to preach." The two belong together. Their intimacy with Him gave them that strong sense of hopefulness which enabled them to spread abroad His message with enthusiasm and conviction.

The first Gospel lays stress upon the need of assistance in widespread evangelism. Jesus (Mt. 9:35 ff.) had been making an extensive journeying throughout Galilee, teaching, preaching and healing. He had met multitudes everywhere in bitter need, for whom the national

leaders seemed to have no care, "sheep not having a shepherd." He longed to give them the helpful message of divine love and human friendliness, and seemed to call the Twelve around Him that this might be quickly and widely achieved. No doubt that at this early day the Twelve began to realize the opportunities and the possi-



View on the Sea of Galilee.

*From a photograph.*

bilities of such work. They gained that sympathy for men and women in spiritual darkness that heartened them for steady serviceableness.

Luke says little about the motive of the call, but he emphasizes its importance. Before Jesus made His momentous choice He spent the whole night in prayer for God's guidance. He realized the significance of this appointment and the greatness of the service to be exacted. The apostles were to become transformed into His likeness, guided by His ideals, fitted to continue His work of soul building.

We thus are impressed with the varied and important outlook before these twelve men. Had they realized at the time what a response to His invitation meant, some of them might have been hesitant. His personality charmed them; His program attracted them and roused their enthusiasm; His devotedness kindled their spirit of sacrifice. They responded unreservedly.

There is a long road to be traversed before a disciple becomes a genuine apostle. The apostle is a leader; the disciple a follower. The apostle assumes responsi-

bility and marks out new lines of progress; the disciple is faithful to the work made clear to him. The apostle embodies Christlikeness; the disciple seeks it. The Twelve were not at once prepared to assume the responsibilities germane to their position. They had first of all to come to know Him as more than a gracious and beloved Teacher, to have absolute confidence in Him as the Messiah who was to redeem Israel. It would seem that they acquired this partly by association, in part by contrasting Him with the leaders of Judaism and again by His own words, so wise, significant and satisfying. They then needed to grasp the real meaning of Messiahship, so different from their inherited conception. Along with it they needed to understand discipleship, particularly divorcing it from any other meaning than humble serviceableness. A year of activity and a year of instruction barely sufficed for these impressions.

Above all other schooling in value was the continuous fellowship with Jesus. He was the embodiment and illustration of all that He taught. In the light of His presence all perplexities were made plain, all unworthiness revealed, all noble impulses glorified. By contact with His unfailing goodness and gentleness and greatness they became friends of all the world, helpers of every type of need, men of spiritual vision, of unflinching enthusiasm, of unquenchable confidence.

Peter and John by nature excelled the rest. Peter would have been a leader in any age or place. His strong, rugged character, his fiery enthusiasm and his deep sincerity made him one whom men would love and follow. He readily assumed responsibility and brought things to pass. The Gospels depict Peter as a man of vast possibilities of development, needing a broadening of vision, a steadying of purpose, a development of unfaltering confidence in his Master and a shaking of confidence in himself. He needed the severest sort of discipline in order that he might become the great leader of the primitive church. His greatest weakness was his self-confidence. When he had substituted for it

an absolute and irreversible confidence in God, he became the natural leader of the apostolic band. Peter's experience of discipline was keen and sweetening. He had an unselfish spirit and a noble personality. The love of Jesus filled his soul and made his transformation sure.

John, the much-loved companion, with whom Jesus had much in common, was a vastly different but equally noble man. He made fewer mistakes than Peter because he was naturally more thoughtful. They found mutual helpfulness in each other, and were inseparable. John clung close to the Master. Capable of being a "son of thunder," as he not infrequently showed, yet he ripened in the close companionship of Jesus into a beautiful, well-balanced, impressive personality, keen of spiritual insight, brave in times of peril, strong in conviction of the truth, yet gentle and persuasive in its declaration. We can readily infer the general effect of a long-continued intimacy with Jesus upon his contemplative mind. He had become the bosom friend of the noblest and most perfect person that ever lived, enjoying His confidence, entering into His inner life. It eliminated almost unconsciously those convictions and ideals which were not in accord with those of his Master.

It is instructive to note that a group as diverse as the apostles could really get together for great ends. Each maintained his individuality yet each became Christlike. Through loyalty to Him their diversity of temperament and of gifts became available toward the achievement of a common purpose. There is a continuous value in individuality, provided it be consecrated, unselfish, and co-operative. The more of such men to-day the better. We may become one in general purpose, in service, and in sympathy without doing identical things.

One great quality of these men was their responsiveness to influences. Their experiences trained them into Christlikeness because they were living at their highest level and in their largest way. All life experiences may be made as fruitful for those of us who deliberately do our best to follow His lead.

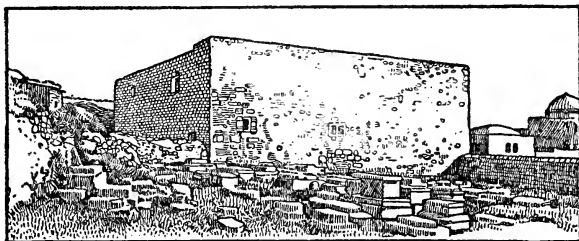
**Chapter 3.—The Ideas of the Apostles Clarified. Scattered References. A. D. 30.**

Of all the periods during which the apostles were in living contact with Jesus the most important was that which connected the Last Supper with the ascension. Not until then did Jesus have completely intelligent and sympathetic hearers. His death and resurrection made significant much instruction that otherwise would have fallen on unheeding ears. For the first time the Twelve were enabled to take an unprejudiced survey of the past and future and to receive in all its fullness the teaching of the Master.

The evening of sacred fellowship in the upper room did much to prepare them for this later comprehension of the truth. There around the table in familiar intercourse Jesus unveiled His soul. Telling them explicitly that there were many things yet in His mind for them of which He could not speak at the time, since they were not prepared to understand, He talked of the separation that would soon take place, of the close and permanent union which it would make possible, of the continuing sense of His abiding presence filling them with confidence and power, of the peacefulness of spirit which should be the normal expression of their sense of fellowship, of the conquests they would make in their own hearts and in the world through the power of prayer, of their realization of the presence of a Helper at all times of need, and of His work in educating them to a knowledge of the truth, and in supplementing and sustaining their faith. He dwelt upon the love He had manifested for them and had received from them, and urged its continuance as the secret of enduring, sacrificial service in the years to come. Such friendship needed not to cease; it was rather destined to abide and deepen and become more fruitful. He and they were as truly one as the vine and the branches. He was their beloved Master, but a deeper bond of association had developed. They were His real friends, worthy of sacred confidences, to whom truth would not be

doled out as to dependents, but revealed as to sympathizing supporters and coadjutors. This unreserved, uncalculating friendliness they must make a part of their own personality, manifesting it to one another, as they held Him in affectionate and loyal remembrance.

Not only were they thus to reproduce His personality as they continued to move about among men. They were to await the Holy Spirit, the Helper, who would enter genuinely into their experience to direct, to influ-



*From a photograph.*

**So-called House of the High Priest, Caiaphas.**

ence, to enlighten. Thus they would be far from helpless, when He, their Friend, had apparently disappeared. A heavy responsibility would rest upon them, but along with it would be provided the assistance which would make their lives fruitful.

The disciples could hardly have realized the full significance of these declarations, yet they made a deep impression.

The experiences which followed in quick succession were salutary. Every one forsook Him that night when He was seized by the soldiers. There was not one who could say that he had not flinched in the time of trial. John and Peter recovered quickly from their panic and followed the procession to the palace where the high priest dwelt. Possibly neither of them dreamed that there could be a fatal ending to this disagreeable episode. As they remained near their beloved Master and the bitterness of spirit manifested by the rulers devel-

oped and the danger not alone to Him but to all who were identified with Him became clearer, the testing time came for them. So far as evidence goes John played the part consistently of a brave man. There was nothing that he could do to actually aid his Master. He could only presume upon his acquaintance with those at the palace to enable him and his friend to enter with the rest of the throng and then give Him the support of his presence and sympathy. Even so much called for courage and determination. John may have been accosted very much in the same way as Peter, but without causing him to swerve from his purpose.

Peter in the crowd without in the court, hardly knowing in the excitement of the moment what he did, thrice denied that he was one of the followers of Jesus. At the third denial His Master turned and looked upon him with a tender, penetrating, sorrowful glance that brought the prediction of a few hours before to Peter's remembrance, as well as his indignant denial. Heart-broken he rushed away to grieve over his disloyalty to the One he tenderly and loyally loved. That experience was the making of Peter the apostle. It forever convinced him of his weakness when dependent upon himself and sent him in humility to his knees.

The spectacle of the cross made a deep impression upon the disciples. Not its cruelty, not the suffering, not the hideous mockery of this cruel execution of the best man that they had ever known, impressive as were these phases of the tragedy, influenced them so much as the commanding fortitude, the unforgettable dignity, the resolute self-sacrifice, the glorious heavenly-mindedness exhibited by Jesus upon the cross. A last uneffaceable impression of what truly God-like character was, He made that day upon their souls.

The resurrection morning was for them the beginning of a new life, one which had no ending, whose significance had no bounds. Their Master was back among them; they were assured of His identity; yet He was not the same. He spoke as their Lord with a note of



authority and finality not sounded before. He tenderly forgave their sudden abandonment and knit them to Him by more enduring bonds. He explained to them more fully the work they were to do, and made clear the visions of the past in regard to Himself.

Our Lord is being placed on trial constantly to-day. Must we, in order to become His reliably loyal disciples undergo the experience of a Peter? While it was worth all it cost to have such a man emerge as leader, yet his fall was due to his blind self-confidence and was wholly unnecessary. The royal road to high service for Christ is not by way of sin and recovery, but by constant and earnest holy living.

When the disciples fully yielded themselves to their Lord, He made a sudden and surprising transformation in them. With such complete obedience His work will always be achieved.

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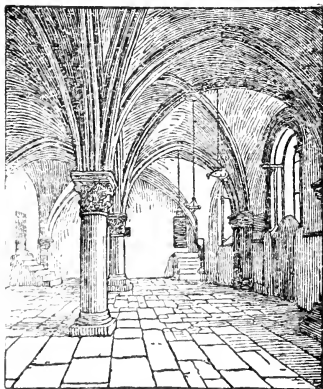
#### **Chapter 4. The Day of Pentecost.**

Acts 1:12—2:42. A. D. 30.

Luke commences his notable history of the rise and progress of the Christian Church by relating in terse but telling fashion the story of the period which followed the resurrection and of the last day spent together by the Lord and His disciples. He implies that it was a busy interval, a time of apostolic instruction, of teaching which so definitely centered upon the kingdom that was to be that the eager disciples longed to be given more definite information regarding its realization. Jesus gently rebuked their eagerness as inappropriate and declared such tidings to be unimportant. Their work was clearly defined by Him. It was to be a bearing of witness to their fellow men of all that they had been privileged to know and see and comprehend. For this

service He and they knew that they would need resourcefulness in abundance. This He told them they would realize, gaining a great access of power, wisdom and self-confidence, when the Holy Spirit was given to them. Until it was given they should not leave Jerusalem. Already they had given evidence of earnest discipleship; they had expressed their consecration in the rite of baptism; they were now to wait for the baptism by the Holy Spirit, which would endue them with heavenly power for the adequate performance of the vast responsibilities about to be laid upon them. After its manifestation they were to go forth fearlessly to disciple all nations, remembering that their Lord, the source of all authority in heaven and on earth, would be with them until the consummation of their hopes.

It was a stirring program. We may well picture the eagerness and absorption with which the little circle, after their return to the seclusion of the upper chamber in



**The Upper Chamber.**

The traditional place of the Last Supper, and of the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost (see cut on page 14).

the sacred city gave themselves by way of preparation to unceasing prayer and consideration of the program they should follow. One item in the work of careful preparation was the choice of an apostle to take the place made vacant by the defection of Judas. They were impelled to this action by a desire to maintain the representative number of their circle as well as by the urgent need of the full number of acknowl-

edged leaders. That witness-bearing was the function they had prominently in mind is suggested by the requirements formulated by Peter which

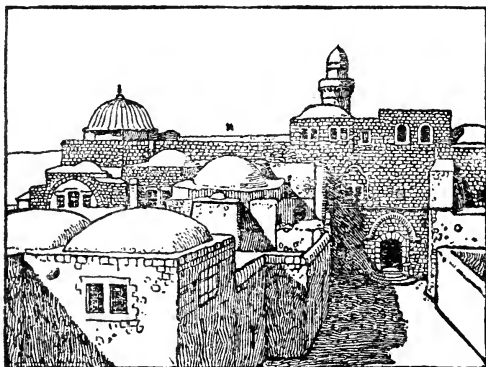
had to be met. How many of the larger company were eligible is not mentioned. So thoroughly do the Gospels center attention upon the Twelve that one is apt to suppose that no greater number attended Jesus closely. At least a few others, however, had participated in the experiences of discipleship from the very beginning. Matthias was quite as well able as the Eleven to give his testimony concerning the unique personality and life of Jesus.

We have no evidence that the Twelve were unwilling to recognize the leadership of others than themselves. James the Lord's brother, Barnabas, and Saul of Tarsus were eminent examples of the pre-eminence which goes by heritage and by natural fitness. They were made welcome and given the honor which was their due.

The Book of Acts, like other historical portions of the Bible, seems to follow a personal clue. It is the story of the triumphs of the Gospel as preached by Peter and John and by Paul. It may be analyzed geographically as the story of the widening influence of the early Christian Church from Jerusalem to Samaria, to Cæsarea, to Antioch, to Asia Minor, to Macedonia, to Greece, and finally to distant Rome herself. Probably that analysis is most satisfactory which makes the aim of Luke the telling of Paul's share in making Christ known to the world. To the author of the book, with his broad sympathies, the most glorious fact regarding Christianity was its extension beyond the walls of Jerusalem or the borders of Palestine, and its welcome to every human being without distinction of race. For this broadening it was chiefly indebted to Paul. With great skill Luke marshalled his facts, portraying first the establishment of the church at Jerusalem, its success, the boldness of its leaders and the consequent persecution; then, indicating the fourfold outcome of this persecution, the conversion of Saul, the scattering of believers, who became self-appointed evangelists, far and wide, the founding of a church at Antioch, and the enlightening of Peter; then following with faithfulness the history of

the evangelization for which Saul was commissioned by the Antioch church. Until Saul accepted this commission, Peter, John and James were the three acknowledged leaders of the Church; within two years the young evangelist had won an ungrudging admittance of his unquestionable mission to the cultured Greeks of Asia and Europe. Within five years he had become the foremost figure in the Church, alike beloved and hated as few others could be.

The starting-point of this thrilling story of the history of Christianity was the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Expectant as the disciples



**Tomb of David.**

The room shown as the cenaculum or "upper chamber" is in this building at the point marked X (see cut on page 12).

were, their forecasts were vague. It is not likely that they realized how great a task lay before them. They had no idea of abandoning Judaism, but cherished the hope of making every Jew a believer in Jesus as the promised Messiah. To them on the day of pentecost came a signal and unmistakable token of a divine commission. It gave them a sense of power akin to that felt by their Master after His baptismal vision. The form of expression which this experience took was surprising alike to them and to those who saw them on that

day. No one can satisfactorily explain the "speaking with other tongues." No one, however, can possibly deny that on that "great and notable" day a new factor was introduced into the religious life of the followers of Jesus. The gift they received was one of which the "speaking" was but a symptom.

Peter's splendid address, of which the words quoted in the second chapter of Acts are only an abstract, reveals his power of leadership. Explaining the phenomena of the day as a fulfilment of familiar prophetic expectation, he declared that Jesus of Nazareth, whose character they had known, had been raised from the dead after His crucifixion, as the Psalmist had declared would be the case, and as His disciples were prepared to testify. This Jesus by the gift of the Holy Spirit was now revealed as the divine Messiah.

The day of Pentecost was not the date when the Spirit of God was first manifested to the world. Yet on that day the era of the Holy Spirit may be said to have begun. Jesus had said that He must depart in order that the Helper should come to His disciples to aid them in dealing with a world of moral beings. Since Pentecost His disciples have been able to definitely realize the presence and help of the Spirit of God and to expect it as a factor in their every-day lives.

The most glorious aspect of this era of the Spirit is its universality. The history of the Church quickly gave evidence that any one could receive spiritual blessings.

**Chapter 5. The First Manifestation of Friendly Power.  
Acts ch. 3. About A. D. 31.**

The effect produced upon those who listened to the impassioned yet powerful appeal of Peter on the day of Pentecost was truly remarkable. We need not explain their yielding to his exhortation as a miracle. To a certain extent many of them may have been prepared for just such a crisis. They had known of Jesus; they had witnessed the loving-kindness and the truth of His life among men; their sober thought was in His favor. When the apostle, Spirit-filled like his Master, drove home to their consciousness the significance of His life and death and resurrection, they were immediately convinced that he spoke words of soberness and truth, and responded to his appeal for repentance and baptism. The number of those who were thus responsive was very great.

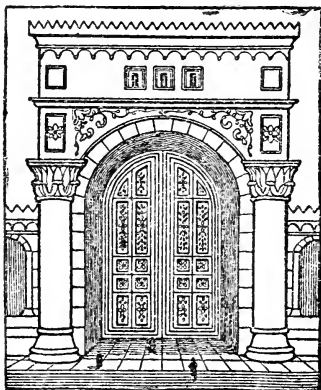
They formed a marked body, distinguished as enthusiastic disciples, filled with the spirit of fellowship, holding regularly a service which commemorated their Lord, and engaging constantly in prayer. They were faithful to the routine of Judaism, too, and seemed to be held in favor by all classes. The rulers did not fear them and had no desire to give them trouble. The Judaism of that day was very tolerant of the personal opinions of those who outwardly respected the usages and rules of the Jewish religion. There were in Jerusalem numerous synagogues maintained by men who had some specific article of faith or peculiarity of birth which led them to wish to assemble together (Acts 6:9). The early Church may have been regarded as forming only one more of these permissible gatherings. Its oneness of spirit, its fraternalism, its splendid generosity, its devotedness in all matters of religious activity, the happiness which characterized its members and the lofty character of their ideals gave it favor among those whose judgment was of value, and were potent to attract a steady addition of members.

How long this idyllic state continued we have no means of determining. Some time may have passed

before the incident occurred which embroiled them with the authorities. We may well suppose that the instruction of the large addition to their number would for a long period have taxed the energies of the apostles and their immediate circle of matured believers. Such wonderful experiences as came to them might have been confined to the circle of sympathizers, and occasioned no remark or objection.

One day, however, the two leaders of the church, Peter and John, were about to enter the temple to join with the great throng of worshipers in the afternoon service of prayer and sacrifice. Like many other devout Jews, they loved to witness the beautiful symbolism of this uplifting service, and to give both silent and open expression to the thoughts of reverence, praise and gratitude which filled their hearts. The great majority of the Christians were probably present at that time.

The two apostles were passing from the great outer court of the temple through the magnificent entrance which was fittingly termed the "Beautiful Gate" into the inner courts, when a poor cripple of middle age, placed daily on the steps of the ascent that he might solicit alms from those who were benevolent, besought them to help him. Something about the man or in his eager gaze aroused the responding sympathy of Peter. To be thus solicited was surely no novelty, since it had long been customary for beggars to make this entrance their place of resort. The beggar may have made his appeal at a time when Peter was prepared to deal more



**The Beautiful Gate, Restored.**

aggressively with the people at large than before, or he may have shown an expectancy which was based on the habit of goodness on the part of these apostles. At all events Peter took a quick resolution. Looking at the cripple with a piercing gaze which conveyed decision and encouragement, he bade him give attention, promised him healing in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, and lifted him to his feet. To the cripple's unbounded wonder and delight, he could both stand alone and walk. Accompanying the apostles he attended the solemn service in the manner of other men for the first time in his life. Like an Oriental, he could not refrain from extravagant demonstrations of joy. Being so well known to all who were wont to enter the temple, he was readily identified as the long-time cripple, and his evident healing made a profound impression upon all the people.

The service over, he would not let his new-found friends escape. The throng, desiring to have the marvel explained, gathered, as usual, in the portico known as Solomon's, which extended along the inner side of the eastern wall of the temple area, the popular forum in Jerusalem. Here Peter addressed them at length in a discourse of which we have an abstract in Acts 3:12-26. Denying that he or his companion were able to achieve this work of healing, he declared that the God of their fathers through the power of Jesus, the Holy and Righteous One, wickedly crucified by the people, but raised from the dead and glorified, had wrought the cure. Since they acted ignorantly, and inasmuch as this experience was needful for Him who was to become the Saviour of men, they could by repentance and obedience obtain full forgiveness and hasten the Messiah's reappearance. Jesus had been that Prophet who was to instruct the people. Fatal indeed would be the ignoring of His words. As men of Israel and heirs of the promise given to Abraham, it was fitting that they should be foremost to accept God's Messenger, the long-expected Messiah, and to give Him obedience.



These were bold words and of great significance. They affirmed in unequivocal terms the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth and his continuing Lordship, as proven by His resurrection from the dead. To give them utterance called for great courage and clear-headedness. Nothing could give stronger testimony to the change which had been already wrought in Peter.

How interesting an illustration this narrative affords of the value of the co-operation of good people! Taken singly they have small chance to forward the ideals which they approve. United they command any situation and may uphold their principles with success. The unity of the early Church was one secret of its power.

The other cause of its aggressive power was its loyalty to Christ. He seemed very real and near to every Christian, therefore they had confidence and courage. The nearer the Church of any age can keep to Him, the more assured its power.

**Chapter 6. The Boldness of Peter and John. Acts 4; 1-31. A. D. 31.**

The bold and definite words of Peter, who did not hesitate to denounce the people to their face as murderers of Jesus, came to the ears of those in control of the temple. Perhaps they would have overlooked his utterances with that tolerance born of entire confidence in their own strength which was characteristic of the official Jew in dealing with his excitable countrymen, but he had definitely declared that Jesus had risen from the dead. That this abhorred belief should be spread abroad from their own precincts was too much for the Sadducean priests. They sent the temple officer and his soldiers to arrest the bold speakers and place them in detention for the morrow. It was too late to spoil the effect of Peter's stirring address. Many more enrolled themselves among the number of acknowledged believers.

We can only conjecture the feelings of the two imprisoned men that night, liable to cruel punishment on the following morning. To be under the ban of the haughty hierarchy was no trifling matter. It might mean continued confinement or severe scourging or any other discipline which these arrogant rulers might devise. Yet we may be sure that their courage was undaunted and their purpose unchanged. Heretofore their work had gone on unchallenged by the authorities. Now they were certain of an examination, perhaps of a condemnation. From Peter's words we can infer that their thoughts were not so much on such consequences as on the notable opportunity of witnessing which they would have in the presence of the Sanhedrin.

Two men brought up as they had been might well stand in awe of the council and dread its displeasure. From infancy they had been trained to regard it as the arbiter of Israel's acts and to honor its members as worthy of supreme reverence. But their companionship with Jesus had been an additional training in the art of judging men. He had been so unmoved by mere

display, so ready to make a stand against unrighteousness, even when veiled in dignity or protected by usage, so straightforward in estimating every man of whatever degree on the basis of his actual merit or usefulness, that other considerations ceased to have power to blind His disciples to the real truth. They were able to face men as men, frankly and fearlessly, because in addition to this candor and keenness of judgment they possessed a supreme confidence in the protection of God and the leadership of the risen Christ. The assurance of faith was never more clear and strong than to these prisoners awaiting trial.

The tribunal before which they came was indeed an august and imposing one. Composed of men of dignity and repute, accustomed to a proud self-valuation, it would be in no mood to brook resistance. It included the men of greatest fame and widest influence in the nation. It had supreme jurisdiction over civil and religious questions in Judea. No doubt it contemplated little trouble in dealing with these men who had given rise to such a disturbance.

But it was dealing with men who were far from ordinary. The skill exhibited by Peter in meeting the situation was a great surprise to them. The apostle laid stress upon the undisputed benefit which had been rendered to the man so long known as a cripple, and forced the Sanhedrin to recognize it as such. He did not hesitate, moreover, to declare with boldness that the cure was due to the power of Jesus of Nazareth, despised and cruci-



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**Annas and Caiaphas.**

fied by them, but raised from the dead by God and given pre-eminence as the expected Messiah, through whom, and through whom only, would there be salvation.

These were strange words for the ears of the haughty rulers. Regarding Peter and John attentively, they saw that these were men who made no pretence of being trained scholars, yet were men of power and skill and insight. Only their intimacy with Jesus explained the wonder, but it was adequate. The authorities felt themselves blocked in their intention of punishment by the embarrassing fact that the former cripple was now a well man. To penalize such a meritorious deliverance was to arouse against themselves all right thinking men. So they chose to try that last refuge of baffled tyrants,—bluster and browbeating. They strictly forbade the apostles to speak or to teach in the name of Jesus, claiming that He was still a factor in the lives of men.

Had the two men gone forth silently, accepting their discharge and rejoicing in their freedom, no one would have had a word of blame for them. But they took a braver course in firmly declaring that they must continue to bear testimony concerning the momentous facts of which they were eye-witnesses. At all hazards they would clearly and honorably maintain this right. We cannot suppose that this straightforward declaration was satisfactory to the members of the Sanhedrin, but they did not dare to oppose the mood of the people which was highly favorable toward the men who had done so notable a deed.

Freed from all restraint, Peter and John joined the company of believers at their usual rendezvous and reported all that had taken place. The renewed courage and increased enthusiasm of all were voiced in a prayer which is a model of pointedness and appeal. It ascribed to God all power as the Creator and Preserver of the universe, quoted the second Psalm as being expressive of the conditions prevailing at Jerusalem under

the rule of Herod and Pilate and the Sanhedrin, and appealed for a new enduement of strength and courage to witness, and for a continuance of the gracious manifestation of healing power. It forgot all but the opportunity and plead for success in meeting it. No wonder that the petition was answered by a new sense of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

This experience of Peter and John may not have been the only one of its kind, but it was probably the most representative one. It was important both because of the confidence which the disciples gained in themselves and in that for which they stood, and because the Sanhedrin discovered that the "superstition" regarding Jesus had by no means lost its hold. It gave the new movement a prominence it had not sought, but which was not wholly unprofitable.

What changed these people so completely was their developing confidence in God. This transformed a halting Peter into a calmly courageous one, a timid gathering into one which prayed for courage to keep on witnessing. Such reliance is the secret of all true progress and of all serene firmness.

That the two apostles had "been with Jesus" readily balanced all disqualifications for dealing with the Sanhedrin. To imitate His spirit, to adopt His ideals, and to view life from His standpoint fits one for any experience,

**Chapter 7. The Unity and Constancy of the Church.  
Acts 4: 32—5: 42. Between A. D. 32 and 34.**

The fortunate outcome of the encounter with the Sanhedrin gave a real impulse to the life of the little community of believers. More than ever they exhibited a unity of spirit which was truly remarkable. Their feeling of brotherhood was so keen that each one who had means treated his possessions as if they belonged to all. Many went so far as to dispose of their lands or houses and to bring the price secured for these as an offering to God to be distributed freely by the apostles to all who had need.

While the church was but a congregation or a community in which the apostles were the recognized leaders and the circumstances of each member were well known, this kind of self-sacrifice and enthusiasm was not without its advantages. It served to knit the whole body of believers together. Moreover, it enabled the poorer members of the brotherhood to receive aid without putting them under personal obligation. Yet the apostles must have chiefly valued it as the manifestation of a splendid Christlike generosity and brotherliness, befitting those who professed to be following close after Jesus.

A notable instance of the exhibition of this grace of brotherly generosity in its finest form was that of Barnabas, a native of Cyprus, a natural leader of men, a man of fine qualities and noble personality. He felt deeply the prevailing tone of sentiment and with genuine consecration brought to the apostles the proceeds of the sale of a portion of his property.

The commendation, naturally and unhesitatingly given to Barnabas and to others for their thoughtful and yet royal generosity, aroused the envy of others of less thorough consecration, who coveted the honor and the recognition given these without being willing to make the sacrifice they entailed. A man named Ananias and his wife Sapphira determined to sell some property

and pretend to bring to the apostles the whole of the proceeds, secretly retaining a portion themselves. They thought thereby to cheat the apostles and the community, but they were really trying to deceive God. No doubt the manifestation of the presence of the Holy Spirit had been particularly marked in the case of those who had shown this Christlike virtue. Moreover the apostles had received the money not merely on behalf of the brethren but in the name of the risen Christ. The suddenness and severity of the punishment of the guilty couple not only revealed the determination to enforce the sanctity of the relations between God and the church but the peculiar meanness of their sin. It was a warning that liars and hypocrites had no place in the new community.

The result of this judgment was a strong impulse to the church. Men and women of the right sort were continually being added to it, until its strength was apparent to all observers.

The Sanhedrin had gradually become infuriated by this rapid development of the new community. They could not readily find occasion for dealing drastically with it, since each member was a devout Jew, faithful to all his obligations and perhaps unusually faithful to the duties of public worship for one of his station in life. Not until the name of Jesus was being heralded throughout the city and country did the council try to force an issue with the apostolic leaders.

At the meeting of the council, made more momentous and perplexing by the strange deliverance from prison of those who had been shut in the day before, and by the steadfast refusal of any of the leaders to obey the strict commands of the council, the high priest made a threefold charge that they had been disobedient to the Sanhedrin, had been active in propagating what they had been ordered to cease from teaching, and were seeking to make the populace believe that the members of the council were responsible for the death of Jesus.

In reply Peter simply stated that he and his fellows

must follow their consciences. They could not desist from a work to which they believed that God had called them at the mere command of men, however venerable and worthy. This was a principle which no Jew would dispute. God's will, once clearly made known, was at all costs to be obeyed.

But Peter went on to justify the assumption of the disciples that they were truly grasping and following the will of God. The council had condemned Jesus to die a shameful death which would under ordinary circumstances have ended His career ignobly and irreparably, as one under the curse of God. But instead God had glorified this Jesus and exalted Him, attesting His divine personality and proving Him to have been the Messianic Saviour of men, as He claimed to be. Of this wonderful fact, so full of interest and value to all Israel, the disciples were witnesses. But further evidence of it was seen in the spiritual manifestations which the risen and ascended Lord had vouchsafed to the whole body of believers. The duty of the apostles clearly was to continue to exercise the glad privilege of witness-bearing, whatever the consequences to themselves.

Little wonder that the council was enraged at these words to the pitch of murder. But Gamaliel, the revered and learned Pharisee, had wiser counsel. Its character proves little concerning his sympathies. He advised that the movement be unrestrained. If born of human energy alone it would come quickly to destruction as its predecessors had done; if really set on foot by God, to oppose it would be not only dangerous but foolish. His advice was taken, the apostles scourged, ordered to cease from preaching, and dismissed. They went home rejoicing that they had been able to endure the trial, and threw themselves with renewed energy and resolution into the work.

True courage roots itself in a clear conscience. None are so brave as they who truly serve and genuinely love; none so impotent and useless for the really great achievements of life as they who pretend to be what they



are not conscious of being. A Peter or a Barnabas stirs men's souls and quickens their sympathies. A Caiaphas or an Ananias blights all aspiration.

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**Chapter 8. The Martyrdom of Stephen. Acts chs. 6,7.  
About A. D. 34.**

The renewed vigor with which the apostles preached and taught had its effect in the steady growth of the body of disciples. Their number made it very difficult for the apostles to keep track of cases of individual need. Complaints were made by Greek speaking Jews, numbered among the body of believers, that their needy ones were often overlooked in the daily ministration to those who were afflicted in any way. This charge can have had no serious foundation, since this service to the poor was still in the hands of the apostles, who could hardly be accused of favoritism. The mistakes arose because the Twelve were overburdened by their varied responsibilities.

Their sensible suggestion regarding the best remedy to apply has helped to solve many a problem in the life of the Christian church. They had a duty which was likewise a great opportunity. They needed to give their whole time and strength to the work of witnessing to the eager people concerning the things of God. It was neither needful nor fitting that they should consume that energy in the work of hunting up poor women and ministering to their needs, when among the body of believers were an abundance of men well qualified to perform duties of this sort and even to assume a sort of leadership in matters of minor interest affecting the welfare of all.

Their proposition that a board of seven representative men should be entrusted with the administration of the

charitable relief pleased the community of believers. At once the recommended action was taken. These men were selected because of their unblemished reputé, spirituality and sound sense. The apostles established their official standing by formally setting them apart for their responsibilities. They were evidently to have the right to do their best as associates of the apostles in the leadership and guidance of the whole community. Their names are Greek names, yet some of them may well have been Jews of Palestinian birth. Doubtless the selection was made under apostolic influence on the basis of spiritual and mental qualifications rather than on racial lines. It seems to indicate the prevalence on the whole of genuine brotherliness in a community in which the natives of Palestine probably far outnumbered those of foreign birth.

This step was one of great importance to the infant church, not alone because it was a first step in organization, but likewise a recognition of the rights of the laity in leadership. The Seven, as subsequent events indicate, were not mere almoners of charity but genuine leaders of their fellows, accorded adequate respect and ready obedience.

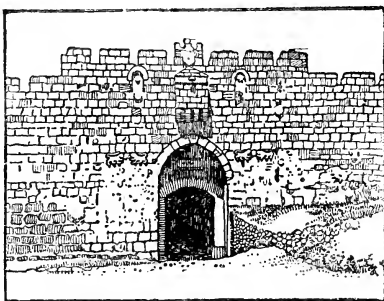
Two significant results followed hard upon this action. There was a marked increase in the impetus given to the spread of the Gospel, many even of the priests in this priest-ridden city declaring their adherence to the faith; and Stephen, the foremost of the Seven in personal gifts and spiritual power, began to acquire a widespread reputation as an effective associate of the apostles. He was altogether a different sort of man, with ideas less cramped by the teachings of the Palestinian rabbis. Full of enthusiasm and devotion he gave himself heart and soul to the exposition of the truth regarding Jesus. As he studied His life and teachings he readily grasped their universal values, and their certain setting aside of many of the current customs and ideas of Judaism. It may be doubted whether he implied by any words of his any disrespect for the

temple or for the law. Rather like one of the ancient prophets he asserted God's privilege to reform or punish. He was ready to defend his views before his earlier associates and did so with such success that they could only seek to silence him by demanding his arrest and punishment. He was seized, brought before the council and made to plead.

The address that follows in the book of Acts is a truly notable one. It bears all the marks of authenticity and reasonable accuracy. It is "a prophetic philosophy of Israel's religious history." He begins by referring to the promises given to Abraham, to his settlement in Canaan, to the covenant, to the descent into Egypt and the deliverance through Moses, noting the unwillingness of the people to believe or follow Moses or to adopt the institutions which he introduced. Finally under Solomon the temple was erected, yet, as Isaiah declared, God was in no sense confined to it or by it. It was merely His creation. By their stupid persistency in making the temple of more importance than God, they were but exhibiting in another form the perverseness which had all along marked their fathers, and were thereby resisting the Holy Spirit. Not he but they were breaking the law.

They suffered him to say no more.

Furious with anger, wholly beside themselves in their rage, stung to the quick by the forceful and pointed criticism, they threatened him with death. Unmoved by their clamor, absorbed by the vision that rose before his eyes, he spoke of seeing in the heavens the glorified Jesus in His majesty. This was blasphemy in-



**St. Stephen's Gate, in Jerusalem.**

deed in their opinion, and they hurried him to a shameful death by stoning. Probably it was an irregular procedure from the Roman point of view, although justified under Jewish law in the case of one convicted of blasphemy.

The refusal of the apostles to spend their time in dispensing charity was based upon an important and eternal principle—the necessity of giving one's energies to the noblest service within his range of influence. Incidentally it opened careers without number of generous and thoughtful philanthropy unto consecrated men and women. The career of Stephen was very brief; but like Martyn, Keith-Falconer and Pitkin, he used his opportunity for all that it was worth, and did the work of years in one heroic representative act. No one needs time for his work so much as opportunity and fidelity.

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## **Chapter 9.—The Successful Evangelism of Philip.**

### **Acts ch. 8. About A. D. 34.**

The day of Stephen's martyrdom had been momentous for the church. He had helped many to find themselves, and to realize what belief in Jesus really meant. He also forced the church to declare itself, and directed suspicion against it. The community was now more than an annoying synagogue or sect; it was known as a dangerous set of men and women. Hence with great promptness a bitter persecution ensued which quickly broke up the community and scattered its members. Among those who labored zealously to destroy its vigor was the young man, Saul of Tarsus, who had been the witness at Stephen's stoning. He was relentless and persistent, taking the lead among those who hunted down men and women and imprisoned them. There ensued an orgy of cruelty, supported by the fanaticism and intolerance of the

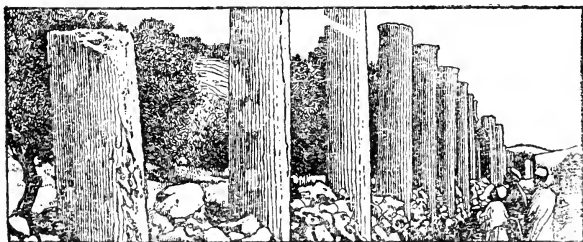
Pharisees, and justified to the people by the supposed necessity of rooting out the pestilential heresy laid bare by Stephen.

But this persecution proved to be a blessing in disguise. It forced Christianity into its proper environment and outlook. The history of the spreading of the gospel at Jerusalem became a history of its wider extension throughout Palestine. Doubtless the church had begun to broaden itself before this, for how else would Saul (9:2) have found disciples at Damascus? But the swift dispersion of many believers from Jerusalem served to strengthen greatly such little groups of disciples as had been formed here and there in Palestine and to establish many new centers.

Luke turns to the work of Philip and others in Samaria. The agents of the Sanhedrin were without authority or influence among the Samaritans, with whom all strenuously orthodox Jews were at feud. The Samaritans were a people of mixed blood. Their religious traditions ran parallel to those of the Jews and were of common origin. They seemed to recognize some form of the Messianic tradition (Jo. 4:25) and to believe in Jesus as, at least, a political and religious renewer. Consequently a Christian preacher in their midst had a working base for appeal and instruction. Philip was, however, in all probability, a foreign born Jew, since no Judean would have found it easy to come into friendly contact with the hated Samaritans. But under any circumstances the work represented a breadth of sympathy and a depth of conviction which went far to equip the evangelist for a stirring and successful campaign. How he came to select Samaria as the scene of his ministry we are not told. Evidently, however, the people were ready to listen to his message. They were eager to know more about the Christ, and were deeply impressed by the personality and power of Philip, who, in his Master's name, did mighty works. The work progressed rapidly and large numbers were given baptism by the evangelist to the great joy of all who shared in these experiences.

Word concerning this unexpected addition to the body of believers was sent to Jerusalem, whence the apostles had not departed. The evidences of religious interest were unmistakable, and the apostles concluded to investigate the movement. They sent down Peter and John, who as leaders of the church and broad-minded men of Galilean origin, were able to judge fairly concerning the sincerity and permanence of the religious interest. These apostles noted that the last tokens of full acceptance by God were lacking. None of the converts had manifested the possession of the Spirit. So they invoked the blessing of God and laid their hands upon those who gave evidence of religious responsiveness, and rejoiced to note that the Spirit came upon them in abundant measure just as upon those who had professed faith in Christ at Jerusalem. With what joy must they have seen this evidence that the prediction of their Master was coming true. The witness concerning Him was being accepted beyond the bounds of Judæa.

Simon, the magician, was a type of adventurer, char-



*From a photograph.*

#### **Herod's Colonnade, in Samaria.**

This magnificent colonnade of marble pillars eighteen feet high, many of them monoliths, extended on both sides of a terrace sixty feet wide around the brow of the hill of Samaria, a distance of nearly a mile. Over seventy of these columns are still standing and many others lie half buried in the ground. They are a part of the ruins of the city of Sebaste, rebuilt by Herod the Great.

acteristic of those days of religious ferment. He may have been self-deceived to some extent; but had passed among the credulous people as a great man, and probably had gained that reputation because of practices

which were illegitimate and claims which rivalled those of the apostles. The preaching and healing of Philip served to turn the allegiance of the people away from Simon and even influenced the magician himself who professed repentance and received baptism.

It would doubtless be fair to compare these results in Samaria with those obtained to-day by a foreign missionary. Such an one can touch the hearts and awaken the consciences of a very rude, ignorant and superstitious people. Their conversion is real, but requires their careful education in order to be lasting. Their motives are mixed and their ideas extremely crude. In course of time their belief becomes intelligent. It was not altogether strange that Simon supposed that he could obtain the apostolic gift by making a sufficiently liberal offer to Peter and John. He had won all results thus far by cleverness, and probably thought that the apostles were possessors of a superior sort of magical skill, which they would share with him for a sufficient inducement. Such a low ideal of spiritual things was Christianity's greatest danger. It needed Peter's vigorous rebuke to define the right point of view.

But Philip had another great opportunity to which he was quick to respond. An officer of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, trusted greatly by her, had become converted to Judaism in his own land and had made the long journey to Jerusalem, presumably to attend one of the great festivals. Philip was providentially led to go southward along the road leading from Jerusalem to Gaza. If we adopt the view of the older commentators and of Prof. George Adam Smith that the word "desert" in verse 26 refers to the town, distinguishing it as Gaza in the desert or old Gaza in contradistinction to the newer city near the coast, it suggests a highway comparatively undisturbed by traffic. Philip's prompt obedience to a command which must have seemed to him strange since it took him away from a useful work which God was blessing, his alertness in availing himself of the missionary opportunity

suddenly presented to him, and his broad-minded disregard of national and religious prejudices (8:38) have often been noted as justifying the title "the evangelist" by which he has been generally known.

The Ethiopian officer to whom Philip was sent had perhaps purchased in Jerusalem a roll of the prophecies of Isaiah and was earnestly studying it but without great result. He gladly welcomed Philip as a teacher of its fulness of meaning. He had been reading a Messianic passage which gave Philip a notable opportunity for explaining its fulfilment in Jesus and to tell of His life and death for the whole world. Overjoyed by the message and ripe for its acceptance the officer asked for baptism as one who embraced the new faith and Philip unhesitatingly administered it. Thus one more of the barriers which had hedged Judaism about was broken down.

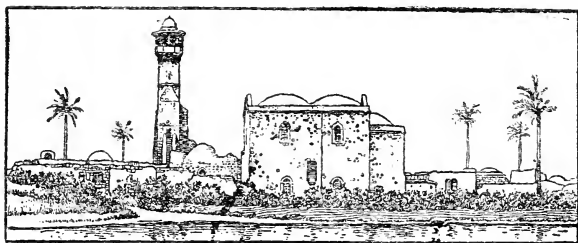
The progress of God's kingdom at all ages depends on such readiness as this to follow the clear leadings of the Spirit of God notwithstanding prejudice or custom or fear. There is a continuous need of Philips, sensitive to spiritual direction yet wise and thoughtful in its execution, prompt and zealous to act yet never forgetting that their service is for spiritual ends.



**Chapter 10.—Peter's Vision. Christianity's Forward Step.****Acts 9 : 31—10 : 23<sub>a</sub>. About A. D. 40.**

When Peter returned with John from Samaria he may have remained at the capital city for some time. The conversion of Saul, the persecutor whose zeal knew no abatement, weakened for a time the energies of his allies and followers. There ensued a period of relative peacefulness and prosperity for the growing church.

This progress of the church gave rise, no doubt, to



View in Lydda.

the need of many an apostolic journey of visitation. Each new group of congregations desired the approval and the helpful counsel of one of the church leaders. Possibly a system of circuit-visitation was gradually growing up. On one such tour Peter came to the congregation at Lydda, a village on the old frontier of Judea, three hours from Joppa. In common with Joppa it was in these days a place of importance and a center of intense Jewish nationalism. Here he healed Æneas, a palsied man, and at Joppa restored to life an estimable woman named Dorcas. Such works of power gave the church great confidence and drew many to belief in Jesus.

But the really important achievement of the journey was Peter's victory over the prejudices of his race. At Joppa he was the guest of Simon, a tanner. This fact goes far to establish his growing breadth of mind and resoluteness of will. The Jews despised and even

hated those who practiced the trade of a tanner, regarding them as unclean, because they were obliged to come in contact with dead animals. Possibly this feeling was not shared by the unpunctilious common people, the working classes to which Peter belonged. One day, a remarkable experience came to Peter near the time of noon, which he felt to be in some form a divine intimation that it was not fitting that he should aim to be more scrupulous than God. He saw a vision while at prayer, of a great sheet lowered from the heavens in which were all sorts of living animals, fit for food. While gazing at the strange sight a voice seemed to say to him, "Rise up, Peter; slay and satisfy your hunger." But impulsively as ever Peter made reply, "Far be it from me, O Lord, for I have never eaten anything which the law declared to be unclean and unbecoming the use of godly men." It was not an unworthy reply. Peter was but remaining loyal to the principles which had been inculcated from his very youth. The distinction between clean and unclean he regarded as established by God, to be blindly conserved. Imagine his astonishment and wonder at hearing the words, "What God hath set before you as clean and invited you to eat, do not presume to regard as inadmissible." It was a lesson over which he began to ponder. What God had made clean he could also make usable. The Jews for centuries had been observing artificial distinctions because of God's ordinance; they had drawn many lines between themselves and other peoples from the same motive; was all this to cease?

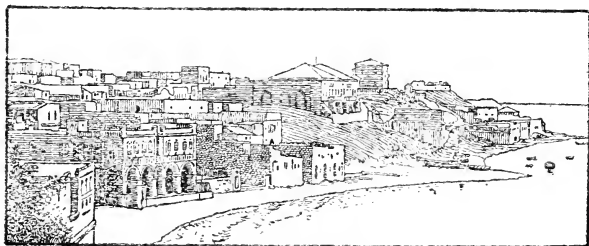
While he was reflecting a group of men knocked at the gate of Simon's house, inquiring for him. Prompted by the inward voice of the Spirit to regard their mission as a providential one for him, Peter went down from the housetop and inquired their message. They told him that Cornelius, a Roman centurion at Cæsarea, a "fearer of God" and well liked by the Jews of that city, had sent by them to have Peter come to his house and declare the will of God. Coming hard upon

his strange experience that noon, Peter understood that this invitation, with which a few days before he would not have dreamed of complying, was in reality a divine call. He therefore made ready to obey it.

The significance of the act and the necessity of the precedent vision became clearer to one who studies the situation with which Peter had to deal. Only a direct divine command, or what he interpreted as such, could have justified him in ignoring the strongest convictions and dearest conventions of his own people.

Cornelius was clearly a man who was held in high esteem by the Jews who knew him. He was the commanding officer of a cohort known as the "Italic cohort," stationed as Cæsarea. It seems probable that this cohort was one recruited from volunteer Roman citizens in the East and used as an auxiliary body of troops. Such a cohort was commanded by regular Roman officers. Cornelius, then, was unquestionably a Roman, a foreigner. He is described as a very devout and very liberal man, "one that feared God." This last phrase means, by general consent of students, when used in the book of Acts, one who was attracted by the religious beliefs of Judaism, and had adopted certain Jewish customs, especially the habits of regular prayer, of Scripture study, of synagogue worship, almsgiving and meditation. Such an one was given grateful recognition in the Jewish community as a religious and virtuous man, worthy of respect and confidence, yet he was in no sense a real proselyte, recognized as a member in good standing of the Jewish community. He was still an outsider, a Gentile, because he was unwilling to wholly conform to the requirements of the law. The contact of Judaism with the world during the several centuries just preceding the life of Jesus induced at once a more rigid drawing of the line between a real Jew and son of the covenant and one who remained outside, and a friendlier treatment of those who were disposed to fraternize with Jews and to adopt their religious beliefs.

This centurion was recognizable as a truly religious man, who affiliated as nearly as possible with the Jews, whom he respected and liked. One day he was engaged in prayer, quite possibly for guidance in regard to his duty in acknowledging his relationship to God. The question of entering fully into the membership of the Jewish community may well have been a perplexing one to him. While praying he saw a vision and heard a mes-



View in Joppa.

sage bidding him send messengers to Joppa and invite to Cæsarea a man named Simon Peter, who would instruct him. He promptly summoned two of his confidential servants and a soldier, all being in sympathy with him, related to them his vision, and bade them go to Joppa to find Peter and bring him back with them.

It is interesting to note that God is represented in Scripture as executing His purposes through those who are living up to their ideals. Peter and Cornelius were both terribly in earnest. Each was anxious for divine leading and ready at all costs to obey it. Such men may alter the trend of centuries.

**Chapter 11. Peter at the House of Cornelius. Acts 10:  
23b—11: 18. About A. D. 40.**

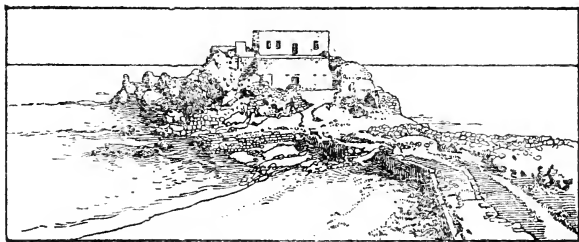
We can well imagine the thoughtfulness of Peter that night at Joppa after his guests had retired. The vision of the daytime had made a deep impression upon him. He could not doubt that it portended some line of action which nothing less than a divine authorization would justify to himself or to his brethren. The story told by the soldiers gave him a clue to the probable duty which confronted him. His own fidelity to the customs of his fathers emphasized the importance of any action which he might be forced to take. With the shrewdness which ever supplemented his impulsiveness he determined to take with him to Cæsarea a group of Christians, men whose standing as such and as loyal Jews would be beyond question, in order that they too might participate in the event, whatever it was, and be reliable witnesses regarding his own share in it.

We cannot overstate the perplexity which would be in his mind and in the minds of those brethren with whom he discussed the vision. Jewish exclusiveness had based itself on the thought of holiness. The Jews were a distinctive people that they might remain a holy nation, absolutely ready for divine serviceableness. It was a noble idea, belittled in the execution, but satisfying still to the average Jewish mind. Without such a vision of the possible abolition of a purely ceremonial distinction Peter might not have felt himself at liberty to respond to the wish of Cornelius.

Probably the apostle had no plan of action completely in his mind, as he walked northward in company with the others. He was far from realizing the full significance of his concession. Familiar as he was with the commission of Jesus to make disciples of all nations, he could only enter into a full perception of its implications through experience. When confronted by a concrete case he could with encouragement deal with it in the spirit of Jesus. Until that necessity arose, he was

not likely to even consider the broader aspects of the commission.

Arriving at Cæsarea, he and his companions found that Cornelius had assembled a group of kinsmen and acquaintances to meet them. The centurion received Peter with great respect, making deep obeisance to him. Doubtless he meant only to express real reverence, not worship; but Peter was quick to disclaim any unusual



*From a photograph.*

**Old Mole at Cæsarea.**

distinction. Entering the house with Cornelius and explaining his waiving of scruples by alluding to his recent vision and its lesson of tolerance, Peter called for the reason of his summons. The centurion complied by recounting his own vision, four days previous, at the time of afternoon prayer, declaring with soldierly terseness how he instantly obeyed the heavenly mandate and sent messengers for Simon. Realizing that the unexpected coincidence in their experiences was a proof that God had brought them together for some purpose of His own, Cornelius requested Peter to give them the message he had for them.

Peter's sermon is interesting as affording an example of apostolic preaching. It is just such a sermon as must have been preached many a time in those early days. Extolling God's readiness to receive and bless those of any nation who are real workers of righteousness, he declared that Christ's message of heavenly peace was not limited to the Jewish people but was for all mankind.

His ministry all knew about, how, anointed with the Spirit, He went about doing all manner of good and delivering all from the thralldom of the devil. Of all this the apostles were competent witnesses. The Jews put Him to a shameful death, but God restored Him to life and made this renewed life perfectly apparent to many. He laid upon His followers the duty of witnessing concerning Him as the universal Lord of all. The prophets too were witnesses of His power to grant forgiveness of sins.

While Peter was speaking, the customary indications of the presence of the Spirit came upon those who were listening. Just what these were is not made clear. Probably those present were unable longer to restrain their emotions, and burst out into rhapsodies of praise to God. They were filled with an overwhelming sense of consecration and devotion, with a great desire to serve God. Such indications were regarded as proof of divine acceptance. The Jewish Christians who had come with Peter were greatly amazed. But Peter, prepared in a measure for just such a result, authorized their receiving the rite of baptism as the formal sign of admittance into the Messianic brotherhood. Moreover, yielding to their earnest persuasions and ignoring altogether the conventions which had hitherto been so dear to him, Peter remained with Cornelius as his guest for a while, doubtless improving the opportunity for imparting instruction.

When Peter returned to Jerusalem the exciting news of this action of his had preceded him. He was taken vigorously to task by the conservatively minded Christians who believed that no one could be a good disciple who was not first of all a good Jew. How natural it was for such to feel indignant and even scandalized by Peter's action we realize when we recollect that every leading Christian up to date had been a Jew, careful to respect and maintain every Jewish ceremonial obligation. Peter's defense was straight and simple. He had not dared to oppose the will of God, manifested so un-

mistakably and confirmed so promptly. Of the important fact that the Spirit of God had been given to the Gentiles the brethren from Joppa were competent witnesses. When thus the group at Cæsarea had been admitted by God Himself into the brotherhood, how could Peter regard them as unworthy of close and friendly fellowship?

This argument was unanswerable. It silenced every objector, so far as Peter was concerned. Apparently, however, there was no general conviction that God had thus thrown wide open the doors of Christianity to the uncircumcised. At best it was understood to be a special instance of grace, such as might always be expected. The great majority of Christians still regarded the pathway of Judaism as the normal road to Christlikeness.

It is instructive to notice how difficult men have found it in all ages to admit that other men may become heavenly-minded in other than their own familiar way. Cornelius was a genuinely good man, as all bore witness, but nothing less explicit than this experience would have sufficed to make Peter accept him as a fellow-disciple. Intolerance and narrowness are not unknown in the twentieth century. They usually must be broken down in a similar way by the unquestionable manifestation of spiritual experience. Fortunate will the church of Christ itself be when its development can be as normal and unprejudiced as that of its great Head.



**Chapter 12. Peter's Imprisonment, Deliverance and Departure. Acts 12 : 1-23. A. D. 44.**

The last episode in which Peter figures followed hard upon the baptism of Cornelius. It arose in connection with another persecution which gave the Christian community trouble. A part of its great interest to us is due to the fact that it brings the narrative of Acts into definite contact with the world's history and gives the student of this history an exact point of reference.

The rapid growth of the Christian community all over Palestine, as well as at Jerusalem, gave great concern to the religious authorities of Judaism. They recognized far more clearly than did the Christians themselves the irreconcilable differences which made such a growth dangerous to Judaism. The older religion was based on absolute obedience to fixed rules, and in practice those rules were interpreted by the religious leaders themselves. Any questioning of their authority was really fatal to the type of religious life they had developed. These leaders were naturally pleased when Herod Agrippa seized the apostle James and put him to death by the sword.

Some have thought that James was the first member of the apostolic body to be martyred because he happened to be within reach at the time of this royal caprice. No further reason would be really necessary, since James was one of the recognized leaders, whose shameful death would be expected to fill the hearts of the Christians with terror. But James was a "son of thunder" and may have been, despite the silence of Acts, one of the boldest and most uncompromising of preachers. The failure of Luke to give him a place of prominence is no assurance of his obscurity. The plan of the book of Acts, as we have already seen, excludes the mention of all incidents but those which became turning points in the evolution out of Judaism of a free, progressive world-wide Christianity.

The appearance of a Herod on the scene with the power of life and death demands explanation. Since

the deposition of Archelaus as tetrarch of Judea in A.D. 6 no one belonging to the family of Herod had exercised such power in Judea. Herod Antipas (Lu. 13:31; 23:7; Mk. 6:17) to whom the will of Herod the Great gave Galilee and Perea, ruled that territory until 39 A. D., a period of more than forty years. Herod Philip (Lu. 3:1), who had received the northeastern territory, ruled it with great success for thirty-seven years until 34 A. D. He was a Gentile in spirit and had little to do in any way with the religious fortunes of the Jewish people. The only contact of the active career of Jesus with him was at the occasions of withdrawal from Galilee (Mk. 8:27).

When Herod Philip died the emperor Caligula made Herod Agrippa ruler over his dominions with the title of king. Agrippa was the son of Aristobulus, and the grandson of Herod the Great. After the tragic death of his father he had been sent to Rome to be educated. He inherited the attractive personality of his father and the wiliness and ambition of his grandfather. He was nearly fifty years of age before his real opportunity came. In youth he had led an extravagant, brilliant social career. During the long reign of Tiberius his fortunes ranged through every scale, but at last he became the intimate personal friend of Prince Caligula, on whose succession to the throne he staked his fortunes. The death of Philip and the enthronement of Caligula happened in close succession, so that one of the first acts of Caligula was the raising of Agrippa to royal rank. In A. D. 39 Herod Antipas was deposed and banished and his territories added to those of Agrippa, who thus became king of Galilee, Perea, and the northeastern regions as far as the neighborhood of Damascus. During the last two years of Caligula's reign, when he conceived the insane purpose of having his statue erected in the temple at Jerusalem, it was Agrippa who at great personal cost and risk persuaded him to forego it. At the death of Caligula, Agrippa helped Claudius to the imperial throne and was rewarded by the addition

of Samaria and Judea to his royal demesne. Thus in 41 A. D. he became king of all the territory of his grandfather.

His reign was short but glorious. His subjects liked him. Probably he was as much of a pagan in heart as all his family, but he was outwardly scrupulous in his relations with his people, taking an occasional vacation to a Greek city like Berytus in order to enjoy the Greek games and atmosphere.

In pursuance of his two-sided policy of strict legalism and liberality he began to persecute the Christians.

Having won approval by the execution of James, he arrested the recognized leader of the apostolic band, Peter. The apostle was placed under strict guard, sixteen men in four watches taking him in charge until the Passover should have concluded. Two of the soldiers



*From a photograph.*

**Gate to Peter's Prison, in Jerusalem.**

guarded the prisoner within the cell, being chained to him, and two were at the door.

The one refuge of the church was earnest supplication to God. Apparently the community gathered in one place and organized a continuous service of prayer. The crisis was a supreme one. No earthly help could avail. They plead for the life so precious to them and for the continuing leadership which seemed so essential.

God heard those prayers and delivered the apostle from his dangerous position. The narrative is dramatic. Peter's profound and trustful slumber between his burly guards, his sudden and complete deliverance, his own bewilderment, his prompt repairing to the well-known

gathering place, where he would find the disciples, the ready faith of the maiden and the skepticism of the assembly—every detail is lifelike and corroborative. Poor human nature manifested itself then as now. The church did not take its prayers with half enough seriousness.

Herod's sudden death followed very soon. While at Cæsarea, probably for the purpose of celebrating public games in honor of the safe return of Claudius to Rome from Britain, and after a public manifestation of pride which all regarded as blasphemous, he died a speedy but terrible death, the victim in fact of a profligate and luxurious life. It was a sovereign calamity, which gave pause to the outburst of persecution.

The career of James is instructive for the average man with powers of leadership. He was one of the first four disciples, invariably honored with his Lord's confidence. He must have been a man of great usefulness and prominence, but it brought, so far as we know, no honorable mention. But the greatest need of the church of to-day is a body of leaders who like James rejoice in usefulness rather than prominence, or, like Peter, maintain a serene and childlike confidence in God under the most appalling conditions. Such are the men needed for crises, and crises never cease.

**Chapter 13. The Developing Church: a Review.**

The writer of the book of Acts was a literary artist, and he used his varied material in the early chapters with consummate skill. To tell a great story by suggestion is no easy task. It demands the historian's range of vision, the student's grasp of the detailed course of development, and the writer's skill in deftly suggesting to the active mind through a cleverly ordered series of narratives the true picture which is before his own gaze. Our author had in mind the rapidly extending church of the days of Paul, the apostle to the Gentile world. He had to indicate the steps of transition by which the little company of believers, differing from their Jewish acquaintances only in their absolute conviction that Jesus was the Christ of prophecy and the Lord of the church which was to be organized, became the promise of an army of resolute, untrammelled, far-visioned missionaries, aiming at nothing less than the acknowledgment of His Lordship by the whole human world.

The group of disciples who awaited in the upper room the manifestation of the Holy Spirit were faithful and fairly conservative Jews. At least they cherished at that time no thought of heading a revolt from Judaism. They were reformers and yet sympathizers. They championed a return to the ancient simplicity and spirituality. They believed that Jesus had indicated the true spirit and the proper methods of Judaism, but did not realize that He had virtually abolished it as a religious system. The significant comment of Mark 7:19 was the remark, made a generation later than the period which immediately followed the departure of Christ, of a writer who had been educated by the illuminating experiences which are rehearsed in the book of Acts.

This group of men were of fine yet not extraordinary quality. They could hold their ground, once having taken it, but they were not of a creative disposition. They had come to know well a great personality. Life could never be restored to its old low level for them.

They were possessed by a grand ambition—to give expression in word and life to the ideals He had made real to them. His personality and His ideals were their basis of comparison and departure. As nearly as possible they meant to live the Christlike life and spread abroad His teachings.

Such a resolve in no way interfered with their customary acts of piety. The Christian community in those early days was more than ever solicitous to do its full measure of holy service, which meant a constant round of devotional acts in private and at the temple. The disruption between its members and the leaders and the rank and file of Judaism arose in natural ways.

These rulers betrayed their unwillingness to face existing facts. They threatened and punished the apostles in a vain attempt to make them cease from witnessing concerning the resurrection of Jesus. They were evidently more anxious to be exempt from criticism than to ascertain and to uphold the truth. Consequently the disciples were forced to make a deliberate choice between obeying them and obeying God. Once awakened to the spiritual captiousness and blindness of these leaders, the disciples were sure to quickly emancipate themselves from such leadership.

They had reason to have confidence in themselves as led by the Spirit of God. No wonder that they were brave and resolute. The day of Pentecost was a day of transformation, but also a day of conviction. No experience, however bitter, could from that day affect their consciousness of the direct support of God. This was a mighty factor in their personal development, dignifying, broadening, deepening their conscious life.

It is of interest, however, to note that the steps of enlargement were mostly of a practical character. Confronted by some actual problem the disciples solved it and passed on. The healing of the lame man who sat at the temple gate aroused them to a sense of their own strength and of the inability of the rulers to gainsay the patent exhibition of divine resourcefulness dis-

played in the presence of the multitude. When the sin of Ananias and Sapphira was laid bare and punished with such promptness, it gave a new value to the inner purity and faithfulness of the loyal church. When the priesthood sought in vain to repress the plain speech of the apostles, all took new courage and confidence. When the distractions of personal service to the needy brethren made it wise to elect laymen to relieve the apostles of this responsibility and to give them freedom for their work of evangelization, the double result was a larger number of official spokesmen and the addition of men who took a broader view of the significance of the work and words of Jesus.

After the martyrdom of Stephen the course of development was more rapid than before. His impassioned words aroused Pharisaic hatred and fear, and justified in their sight a vigorous persecution which quickly scattered the Christian community to other parts of the country and in foreign lands. Wherever these men or women went, they became preachers and teachers of the new faith in Jesus. These were still propagators of Christianized Judaism, but they found that others than Jews were affected by their message of faith and righteousness. Samaritans were converted, then a proselyte from the South, and then Peter was led by the Holy Spirit to baptize, instruct and associate with a group of Romans, acknowledging them as Christian brethren. No one of these steps was anticipated beforehand; none of them could be gainsaid. The church was gradually led to see that God purposed to include within the range of the Messianic promise others than His historic people. Whoever in any nation exhibited a spirit of genuine faith was acceptable to Him. This was a great advance, although it was but the preparation for the truly notable advance to be made under another sort of leadership.

This period of fourteen or fifteen years after the resurrection witnessed some notable achievements; the self-consciousness of the new community; the appear-

ance of fearless, consecrated leaders determined to give expression to the will of Christ as they understood it; the rapid growth of the community into real strength; the wonderful spirit of brotherhood and unity; and the gradual widening of the scope of the church. These were achieved because of the recognized leadership of God.

These early Christians got at the very heart of the matter. The principal factors in human progress are dependence and independence, faith in a personal God who guides, and courage to do whatever such guidance seems to demand. These are the elements which the life of every age needs to include.

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#### **Chapter 14. The Conversion of Saul. Acts 9: 1-19a, and scattered references. About A. D. 35.**

The story of the active career of Saul is a real theme of the book of Acts. It singles him out as the one agent through whom the Gospel was given to the Gentile world. He did not do this work alone. At times others seemed of more importance. Yet on the whole he was the master mind and the one who gave direction to all. In a significant sense the true life of the church was bound up with his life.

It is somewhat surprising under these circumstances to note how varied in character is the narrative which gives us the data concerning the great apostle. Portions of his career are related in minute detail, particularly some of the experiences of the years succeeding the last visit to Jerusalem. But we are told almost nothing of his early life and very little of detail regarding his apostolic career. Much which the student of his career would gladly know of his en-



vironment and activity, his opinions and his motives, is given no expression in the narrative of Acts.

On the other hand, however, the story of the apostle's life, as given in Acts, is a stirring narrative. It bears the stamp of the skilled writer with the power of seeing the trend of a generation and deftly sketching it. It quickens the imagination of the reader, who is made to live over the scenes of Paul's ministry among men, and to realize the noble character which ripened under the storm and sunshine of his checkered career.

When we are first introduced to Saul, he is a young man, yet sufficiently mature and trustworthy to be given very great and responsible commissions by the high priest. Quite possibly he came from a family of distinction. He had been brought up in Tarsus and was perhaps a graduate of the famous university of that city. Doubtless he had not been in Judea while Jesus was carrying on His active ministry. It has been suggested that he was away in his home city or on a mission of some kind. At the time of his conversion, however, he was in Jerusalem, studying with Gamaliel, a learned and gentle rabbi, tolerant and large-hearted.

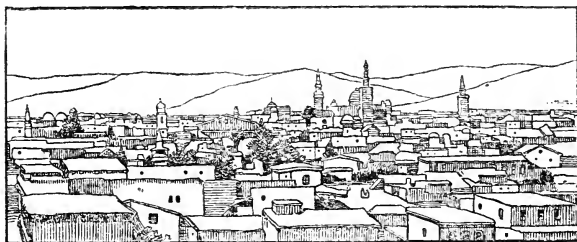
Saul, at this time, by his own confession, was fiercely intolerant and zealous, eager to destroy the stubborn fanatics who persisted in exalting Jesus as the Christ. He believed that they were conspiring to break down the exclusive sanctity of the temple and the authority of the law. He threw himself whole-heartedly into the work of checking their progress. Who can question that he was one of those who disputed with Stephen in the "synagogue of the Cilicians," and, willingly or unwillingly, was a participant in the crime of stoning him to death.

Saul was the kind of man whom only that curious age would produce. He was a Pharisee of straitest sect, a Hebrew of pure blood, proud of his lineage, proud of his attainments, a zealot yet a nobleman.

**His Pharisaism**, it has been well said, was of the type displayed by the young ruler who came running and kneeled at the feet of Jesus, saying, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" He continually longed to secure the righteousness that comes by the law. But he went to Jerusalem as something more than a Pharisee. He was, as he himself declared, a free-born Roman citizen, a fact of great social as well as political value. He was likewise a man of broad culture, possibly in the technical sense, as one who had studied long in a Greek university, certainly in the general sense, as one who had caught the nobler spirit of the Hellenism of his day and its deeper feeling. Few men were as well prepared as he by the circumstances of their early life to make a radical change in their outlook and emphasis, to reinterpret Christian thinking to itself and to grasp in a moment the world-Messiahship of Jesus. He himself regarded the "whole experience of his early life as a providential shaping of his character and capacities for his divinely appointed calling."

Particularly should we so interpret his bitter persecution of the church at Jerusalem. Saul at that time was in a strange mental and spiritual condition. He thought he was doing God service. He was goading himself on to deeds of bloody violence, wholly alien to his exceptionally gentle and tender disposition. Only the enthusiasm and the determination of the logically sustained persecutor upheld him. Yet he was full of misgivings, which made him almost desperate. In his disputes with Stephen and the others, in the noble martyrdom of which he was a witness, in the lives of those whom he was persecuting to the death, he must have been constantly made aware of the genuineness and depth of the religious life of his opponents and victims. The strength of his own position lay in a fixed belief that a crucified man could under no circumstances have been the expected Messiah. The weakness of it lay in the possible appeal to fact.

The three stories of Saul's conversion found in Acts are not exactly alike, but the principal factors are clear. Commissioned by Caiaphas to carry the persecution to the ancient city of Damascus, and accompanied by



**View in Damascus.**

*From a photograph.*

Damascus is the oldest city in the world. Its Biblical history dates from the time of Abraham, but it is chiefly interesting from its connection with the life of Paul. The city is situated in an oasis produced in the Syrian desert by the river Barada (the Abanah of the Bible), making the site one of rare beauty.

others, he was drawing near about midday, when a blinding light flashed from heaven and Saul fell prostrate. He heard a voice addressing him in the spoken Hebrew tongue, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the goad." At this very moment it must have been that Paul received that conviction which forever remained his, that he gazed upon his risen Lord. An assurance was his that wholly changed his point of view. He arose blinded and dazed, was led to Damascus and there was received by the disciples.

The conversion of Saul to the Christian faith was the event, after Pentecost, of greatest importance to the growing church. He was fitted, as none of the apostles were, to enter into the plans of Jesus and to develop Christianity as a world-religion. They had realized the spiritual values of Jesus and His larger significance for Judaism, but there was need of a master mind to give His teachings their final importance.

Many others were being converted by the Gospel,

but his conversion meant more than those of all the others combined, because Saul, in addition to being a cultured, broad-minded, experienced man, was also a man of sincerity, courage, and conviction. Whatever he believed directed his life. He became the champion of Christianity, just as he had been the zealous defender of Judaism. Such men and women are the real supporters and promoters of religion in every age.

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**Chapter 15. The Training of Saul. Scattered References.  
About A. D. 35-45.**

The movements of Saul after his conversion cannot be dogmatically affirmed. The narrative of Acts 9: 19b-30 and that of Galatians 1:16-19 do not perfectly agree. Some authorities give greater stress to the "straightway" of Acts 9: 20 and regard him as beginning at once to preach in Damascus, and after a short time withdrawing to Arabia. Others emphasize the "straightway" of Galatians 1: 16, concluding that the retirement occurred as soon as he had recovered sight and strength. The fact of this retirement is, however, of much greater importance than its exact date. A revolution had occurred in Saul's point of view. Heretofore he had denied that there was a living Christ. Now he knew to the contrary. This raised many questions in his active mind, and time was needed, even for one so finely trained as he, for the reconstruction of his entire system of thinking.

The authority for his absence in the desert is himself in Galatians 1: 17. Where he hid himself and how long he was there are nowhere stated. His motives in retiring may have been varied. He surely aimed to determine what he would henceforth do. He may also have wished to let some time pass before taking up any active public service. Doubtless during this long season of solitary meditation he came to a realization,

not merely of his natural fitness to become a witness to the Gentiles of divine grace, but also of the issues truly involved in the sacrificial work of Christ. No one had as yet seen the issues or stated them, not even Stephen. To Saul's trained mind they were sure to stand forth clearly in due time.

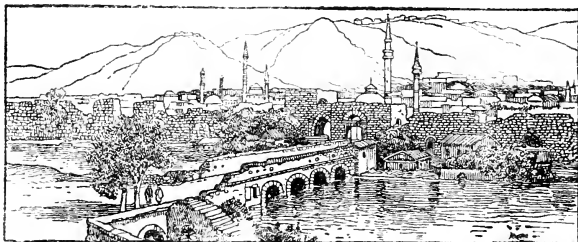
After an interval spent in calm review and readjustment of the data so familiar to him from boyhood, Saul returned to Damascus and labored there earnestly. He was his old aggressive self, disputing in the synagogues and proclaiming that Jesus was the Son of God. He met with astonishing success; and no wonder, for he was familiar with every trick of argument and every hidden prejudice and every point of approach of which his opponents could make use. No one could seem to stand against him. In the end they utilized the last resource of beaten men and plotted to kill him. Learning of this scheme, Saul's friends felt it best that he should slip away quietly from the city where his life was no longer safe.

There are some differences of opinion regarding the first visit of Saul to Jerusalem as a Christian. Generally, however, the accounts of Acts 9:26-30 and Galatians 1:18-24 are blended as both referring to this visit. They mention different names but do not seem to be in opposition.

According to Galatians it was a furtive visit, intentionally secret, made for the specific purpose of getting facts from Peter regarding Jesus. The account of Acts assigns the timidity of the disciples at Jerusalem as the reason for his meeting so few of them, and emphasizes the share of Barnabas in bringing him into contact with some of the Twelve, who in Galatians are specified as Peter and James. Acts 9:29 indicates that he attempted to take up the congenial task of preaching in the synagogues in Jerusalem. But the Jews plotted against his life, and the disciples hurried him away before the church as a whole had had any chance to really know him.

Between his departure from the holy city to his call to Antioch is a considerable interval, perhaps eight or ten years. During this period Saul was said to be "in the regions of Syria and Cilicia," where he was engaged in the active work of preaching, probably also of organizing churches. Quite a group of them were fostered, whether chiefly by Saul we are nowhere told.

Meanwhile a church of great strength and influence had been growing up in Antioch. Some of those who



**Antioch, from the North Bank of the River Orontes.**

The bridge is on the road to Seleucia, the seaport of Antioch. The celebrated grove of Daphne was about four miles down the river to the right of the picture.

had been driven out of Jerusalem after Stephen's martyrdom went as far as that city. In the main these refugees preached only to Jews, but a few of broader sympathies preached to the Greeks. The result was astounding to those of strict Jewish standards. That these converts were sincere Christians could hardly be denied; how significant and permanent their conversions would be merited friendly investigation.

It speaks much for Barnabas that he was selected for this mission. He was in excellent standing at Jerusalem as a generous and kindly disciple. He was apparently a man of broader sympathies and more valuable experience than any of the others. He went to Antioch and entered heartily into the work of the church established there on an inclusive rather than exclusive basis.

The church grew with increasing rapidity, so that Barnabas needed a coadjutor. He thereupon bethought himself of Saul, by whom he had been deeply impressed years before. He found him at home and persuaded him to go to Antioch, where they became companions and congenial fellow-workers.

The preceding years had been full of value for Saul. He was now in the full maturity of his powers, with an experience which made him successful in his work and eager for it. He had become fully convinced, practically as well as ideally, that the Gospel was indeed universal. He could labor unreservedly and enthusiastically at Antioch working with Jews and Gentiles alike. His great heart yearned for them both, his brethren of the faith once given to Israel and those whom he welcomed out of deeper darkness. Having pursued an independent career thus far, he could act not alone with decision and persistence, but with an ever broadening apprehension of the issues involved in the freedom of the Gospel message. All was ready, therefore, for an advance.

Saul's most important preparation for his future work was his whole-souled devotion to his duty. When once convinced that he had been in the wrong, he began to practice the right. As soon as he had become clear with regard to what he should preach, he commenced a work of evangelization. He no sooner faced a responsibility than he met it.

We find a helpful thought also in his brave and patient enduring of discipline. It could hardly have been easy or pleasant for one who must have been conscious of his powers to wait those many years for the opportunity of leadership. He had been a notable man among Jews; Christians almost looked on him with suspicion. But he was meanwhile in the making.

**Chapter 16. Paul's First Missionary Journey. Acts ch.  
13. A. D. 45 or 46.**

In the book of Acts we gain the impression that the work of evangelizing the Gentiles was begun in spite of apostolic plans. It might be wrong to declare that the apostles resisted the manifest indications of the willingness of God to bless repentant Gentiles. More probably they saw so abundant a work before them amid the congenial surroundings of the Jewish settlements, where they knew their power and the efficacy of the Gospel message, that the need of the great world beyond had not yet laid hold of them. It was better in the providence of God that this call came through their own natural associations and sympathies and through the convictions of their brethren of the free church of Antioch to the two loyal disciples, Barnabas and Saul. Each had come out of non-Palestinian surroundings; each was a faithful and reverent Jew; each took a broader view of the mission of the Christ than the average of his Christian associates; each had thoroughly tested himself in the actual work of evangelization.

The conviction had doubtless long been forming in the mind of Saul that some one should carry the message of the Gospel into parts hitherto unpenetrated, letting it help whom it would. Probably he and Barnabas had many a time talked it over together and with the leaders of the church at Antioch before the resolution to send them forth as its representatives was taken. It was one of those epochal acts, the result of many co-operating judgments, on which the Divine seal was set at the very start.

This mission thus begun gave Saul his first real opportunity. Hitherto he had been acting in an obscure environment or as an associate of more prominent men. But the exigencies of such a tour were just such as he could cope with better than most men. His unrivaled knowledge of the technicalities of Judaistic argument, his lifelong acquaintance with Gentiles and their ways of thinking, his familiarity with conditions along the

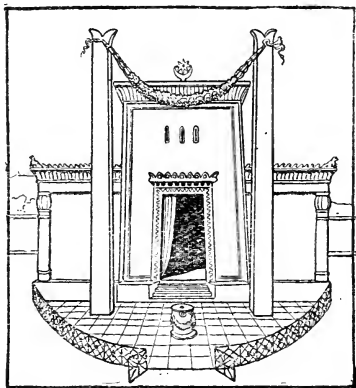


coast and in the interior of Asia Minor, his skill as a speaker and his quickness and coolness of judgment gave him a vast advantage over Barnabas, who was his superior in appearance and perhaps in geniality. The moment real leadership was demanded, Saul came to the front.

There went with the two a young man, John Mark by name, whom they had brought back from Jerusalem. He was related to Barnabas (Col. 4:10), and doubtless was included at his request. He was a useful member of the party, helping in many ways.

The probable plan of campaign was to tour through Cyprus and then by way of the coast back to Antioch of Syria. The chief reason for so thinking is the unexplained defection of Mark before the interior journey had been begun, and Paul's unwillingness a year later to take him again as an associate on the ground that he had not been willing "to go to the work" (Acts 15:38). Mark may have done all that he had ever agreed to do, but Paul wished for men who had just one ambition, and that was to go where the need was patent.

They landed on the eastern end of the great island of Cyprus, at Salamis, where there were many Jews, to whom they spoke at once. Synagogue preaching was an obvious and sensible way of opening their mission in any place. They had ready access to it. were sure to be invited to speak, and met there just those men for whom they were looking, the well-



**Temple of Venus, at Paphos, Restored.**

The image of the goddess was the cone shown in the shrine. Incense was burned on the altar in front of the shrine.

informed Jews and the enlightened Gentiles. They met with no particular hindrance, at least not until they came to the other end of the island to Paphos.

Here occurred an event of considerable importance, in that it not only led Saul to assert himself and made him the accepted leader of the party, but it was the first recorded occasion of the declaration of his Gospel.

Sergius Paulus, the Roman proconsul, was a man of intelligence and reverence. He was listening with gladness to the words of the apostles, when Elymas, a professional "sage," who feared that his hopes of gain would be cut short, tried to prevent a continuance of their influence. With tremendous earnestness and force Saul, facing the man with a piercing gaze which startled him, denounced his motives and declared his judgment.

From that emergency thus met to the end of his days Saul was the foremost missionary of the Christian church. Henceforth he is known as Paul. The significance of the change of name at this time is not wholly sure. The apostle may have already had the additional name from Roman sources. He may have taken the name in view of the new work about beginning.

From Cyprus the party sailed across to Perga on the coast. For some reason, either because it was not healthful to remain at the coast and work or because Paul already was making plans for an enterprise far bolder and of wider scope than the original plan, no long stop was made at Perga. They pressed on after Mark's defection, up into the uplands of Pisidian Antioch.

After a journey which must have included a fair number of hardships and perils, the little company came to Antioch in Pisidian Galatia. Here there were plenty of Jews who in their synagogues as usual afforded an easy method of approach. The apostles were courteously received, and invited to speak. Paul accepted the invitation and with a gesture compelling

silence began to preach. The sermon is not different from what other apostles would have said, because the audience was composed of Jews. He traced the providences of God which finally resulted in the choice of David and the establishment of the kingdom. But that was in order that the Saviour might come, whom John the Baptist recognized in Jesus of Nazareth. This Saviour Paul was proclaiming to them all. Misunderstanding Jesus, the Jerusalemites had put Him to death, but God had raised Him from the dead, a fact known to many witnesses. These were they who were witnessing regarding Him to all people. To those who accepted Him there was available the opportunity of forgiveness, and of redemption and of justification. Let those who would not act be warned.

The Holy Spirit works along the natural lines of intellectual obedience. Paul and Barnabas were convinced of the need and the duty of their new work before the irresistible command came to them. They were, doubtless, looking for light and guidance.

It also uses real ability. Barnabas was a kindly and worthy man, but Paul was a great one. The emergency developed him and made his place. The honest and earnest man or woman can afford to wait God's time.

**Chapter 17. Paul and Barnabas in Galatia. Acts ch. 14. About A. D. 48 or 49.**

Paul's experience in Antioch of Pisidia was of no little importance in determining his missionary policy for the future. The silence of Acts prevents us from knowing much about the events of the years preceding his stay with the church in Syrian Antioch or during that year. Apparently his work had in the main been with those of Jewish birth and training.

During the week which followed the first sermon in the synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia, Paul and Barnabas were busy talking with those who sought their counsel. They shortly established a strong influence over such men. When the second Sabbath came the synagogue was crowded, not alone with Jews or proselytes, but with Gentiles who were eager to hear what the apostles had to say. Such responsiveness on their part, offset and encouraged, no doubt, by an obvious willingness on the part of Paul and Barnabas to encourage them, enraged the Jews, who quickly saw to what all such activity was tending. They gave expression to their feelings by interrupting and denouncing the proceedings. Their rudeness and bigotry called forth a well-merited rebuke from the apostles, who, thinking of the noble word of Isaiah regarding Israel's mission, declared that they would not fail to carry the message of the Gospel to the Gentiles. The people of the city gave them a hearty welcome and among these they found many ready listeners.

A work of real magnitude began at once. It extended throughout the "region" of which Antioch was the center. Those who came to the city for trade heard of the new faith which was being preached by the Jewish missionaries to Jew and Gentile alike. This fact in itself would seem to them very strange and quite attractive, and they would wish to hear for themselves, and thus came under the spell of Paul's persuasive eloquence.

After some time, possibly several months, a period marked by an increasing range of apostolic influence,

the Jews determined to put an end to their preaching. They stirred up the women of rank, who were their blind supporters, and the leading men, and drove out Paul and Barnabas. We may not suppose that this happened without a protest or in a moment. The book of Acts has little to say about apostolic sufferings. But Paul reminded Timothy once (2 Tim. 3:11) of the severity of the persecutions endured at Antioch and elsewhere in Galatia. Quite possibly some of the beatings and scourgings recorded in 2 Cor. 11:24, 25 came to them at this time.

But persecution, however severe, could not daunt the spirit of the apostles or crush the ardent hopes of the converts. All were faithful to their vows and rather gloried in the privilege of suffering on behalf of the Gospel.

At Iconium, some ninety miles to the southeast and outside of the Antiochæan sphere, the apostles halted. As usual they first entered the Jewish synagogue and preached there with abundant success. Both Jews and Greeks received the message. Again this stirred to jealousy and violence the hearts of the Jewish leaders. These were willing that such a message as that of Paul should be preached in the synagogue, but they were not ready to refer it to Gentiles, thus putting them on the same religious plane as Jews. The popular good-will toward the apostles was so genuine and widespread that the attitude of these leaders did not for some time succeed in making the situation perilous for them. At last, however, so bitter became the factionalism and so imminent the danger that Paul and Barnabas deemed it wise to slip away into the Lycaonian "region."

They had to go only eighteen miles to reach Lystra, a garrison town, a "colony" like Antioch, and a place of considerable importance. They found here a good example of the hybrid religion that officially existed in a community with the veneer of Greek civilization. It took the forms and names of Greek deities but main-

tained the ideas of the locality. Paul healed a cripple, a deed which aroused to the highest pitch the wonder and joy of the populace, which planned at once a public welcome to the deities who had, as they conjectured,



**Ruins of an Ancient Church in Lystra.**

There are so many ruins of churches in this vicinity, that it has been called "the place of a thousand and one churches."

come to visit them. Neither of the apostles understood the cries of the people, expressed in the local speech, but they quickly apprehended the meaning of the action of the temple servitors, who were unmistakably preparing to offer sacrifice.

It is interesting to note that the principal place was accorded to Barnabas on purely external grounds. He had without question

the more attractive and impressive personality.

Some may wonder at the complaisance of the priesthood. Possibly the sudden enthusiasm of the populace was not to be gainsaid, more likely the priest was not jealous. It is not impossible that the local guardians of the temple of the city were as ignorant as the mass of the people. At all events the apostles with difficulty prevented the consummation of their purpose. Exhibiting distress and horror they appealed to the multitude to stay the sacrificial rites, declaring that they were not gods but men, witnesses of the true message of the one living God, the Creator and Ruler of the whole universe, who had in times past allowed peoples to have their own peculiar fashion of worship, yet knit Himself to them and their needs by continuous deeds of kindly providence.

Surely such enthusiasm gave the apostles a rare

chance for evangelizing, but again their jealous Jewish foes, following them up from Antioch and Iconium, spread abroad suspicion of their motives, and soon stirred up a mob which stoned Paul and left his body outside of the city, supposably dead. But he recovered sufficiently to return quietly with his disciples to the city and to proceed on the next day to Derbe, still farther to the southeast and at the very edge of Galatia. After a successful work of some duration in this city the apostles determined to retrace their steps, revisiting the places in which they had labored, rather than to go direct to Syrian Antioch overland. Possibly this was because the mountain roads were impassable at the time; more likely the decision was due to a well-considered policy. Paul and Barnabas had determined to assume the responsibility of formally recognizing independent churches in these communities without advice or permission from Antioch or Jerusalem. Their installation of new officers in the cities gave them reasonable freedom in meeting and counselling the congregations. They therefore exhorted each group of Christians to be true to their faith, expecting and enduring tribulations; they organized a church in each community, and encouraged it to begin to live its independent life. Thus they returned to Syrian Antioch with a report which thrilled all hearts.

Those who are looking for opportunity, setting their gaze ahead, are the ones whom neither abuse nor danger nor ridicule can swerve from their course. The more, like these apostles, we let the possible future of the kingdom of God grow before our vision, the more available as real leaders we become.

**Chapter 12. The Council at Jerusalem. Acts 15:1-35;  
Gal. ch. 2. About A. D. 50 or 51.**

The successful work of Paul and Barnabas in Cyprus and Galatia must have greatly stirred even the church at Antioch which had sent them forth. It is hardly within the bounds of probability that either the two missionaries or their sponsors anticipated what had happened. Not merely had they spread the word of the Gospel, but it had taken remarkable effect. Whole churches, made up of Gentile members, or at least having them in the dominant majority, had come into being. Galatia and Cyprus as well as Syria and Palestine were enrolled as provinces of the church, where men and women were being rapidly added to the body of believers.

The Antioch church was no doubt able to receive this report with complacency and to sympathize with the ardor of their apostolic messengers. But what of the Christians at Jerusalem! Mark had returned thither and it is fair to presume that his account of what was being ventured by the missionaries was not unaffected by his own reluctant attitude. No criticisms, however, were necessary to fan the flame of opposition at Jerusalem. The word sent on from the missionaries themselves was sufficient to horrify the strictest of the Jewish Christians.

We must not forget that the majority of the community at Jerusalem were ardent Jews as well as believers in Jesus as the Messiah. They were very careful to walk according to the ordinances, blameless. They still clung to the Jewish idea that salvation was to be granted only to those who were actually Jews or to those who became as like them as possible in spirit and attitude. Such did not relish the letting down of barriers in the wholesale fashion practiced by Paul and Barnabas, who seemed to make it as easy for a rank outsider without instruction to enter the kingdom of God as it was for one of Jewish training. They even



seemed to be advising the Jews who lived in Gentile countries "to forsake Moses and not to circumcise their children." Of course such charges were untrue, but they were believed in the general excitement.

Certain zealous conservatives journeyed down to Antioch in order to bear testimony to the truth. They were in earnest, had the prestige of coming from the center of Christendom, presumably reflected the views of all there, including the apostles, and created at once much trouble. Paul and Barnabas were not men who would permit such declarations to go unchallenged. They had at least the visible tokens of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of their Greek or Galatian converts to strengthen their own convictions and confirm their policy, and to them this seemed clearly to supersede any other authority. Hence they sturdily resisted the argument of the Judaizers, until the perplexed church at Antioch deputed the two evangelists and some others unnamed to go to Jerusalem and have the question settled there before the Twelve.

According to Galatians, second chapter, Paul at one time

went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas for a private conference with the leaders, his purpose being to make sure that they were in reasonable sympathy with his plans of evangelization. He took along Titus as an object lesson of the obvious fact that a Gentile could become a Christian. In spite of the opposition of certain intruders of legalistic temperament, these leaders were large-minded and generous. They saw that Paul



**Paul, the Champion of Christian Liberty.**

By Raphael.

was by nature and training the herald of a Gentile gospel, a work which their own predilections and heritage made very difficult for them. They indorsed his purpose, only urging that he instruct his converts to remember the poor.

Most authorities identify this visit with the one described in the fifteenth chapter of Acts. Identifications are always precarious. It is quite possible that in Galatians Paul refers to an earlier visit to Jerusalem, even, as Bartlet thinks, before the visit of Acts 11:30. The private nature of it would have been reason enough for entire omission in the Acts narrative, which is admittedly meagre until we reach the travel narrative. The question is not one of supreme importance. Paul might well have wondered how he would come out at Jerusalem, had this earlier understanding with the apostles never taken place.

It exhibits the large-mindedness of Paul in an attractive light when he consented to go to Jerusalem. He was willing to run the risk of being misconstrued as one who needed to submit to the judgment of the Twelve, if only he could thus draw the two branches of the church together. His dearest wish was to have his Gentile converts and his brethren in the faith at Jerusalem see eye to eye.

All the way up to Jerusalem the deputation told their wonderful story, to which the simpler-minded Christians in the villages responded with great joy. This shows that the Judaizers were not the real representatives of the church at large.

At Jerusalem they were received by the whole community of believers, who listened to the stirring narrative of their experiences. One whose soul has been thrilled by some great missionary speaker, describing the things he has seen and the wonderful works of the Lord, can readily imagine how Paul by his eloquent tongue moved the very souls of all present. For that very reason the Pharisaically trained auditors broke in with the declaration that to attain fulness of Christian

experience these converts must be made subservient to the law. The discussion was adjourned, but only to provoke an acrimonious debate. If Lightfoot is correct, the experiences of Gal. 2:1-10 probably occurred at this time. When the discussion had spent itself and the time for decision seemed to have come, Peter and James turned the scale. The former referred to his own experience that God had accepted Gentiles, and this without waiting for them to Judaize. Was it right, therefore, to lay upon them the wearisome bondage of Judaism? Not so had Jesus taught.

After Paul and Barnabas had emphasized again the clear manifestations of divine grace in their experiences of Gentiles, James summed up what he saw was the prevailing sentiment. It was not desirable to hamper the coming of the Gentiles to Christ, but only to urge them to be scrupulous to abstain from the gross defilements which every Jew held in horror.

With thankful hearts, accompanied by delegates who would deliver the authoritative message, they returned to Antioch. Galatians 2:11-21 describes a visit of Peter which apparently followed. Following Paul's example Peter without especial thought ate with Gentiles. For this the Jerusalem church was not quite prepared. They criticised, and Peter withdrew, to Paul's indignation. The latter saw that the whole principle of Christian freedom was involved, and the question of salvation. There was only one way of salvation, by faith in Christ.

These incidents well exhibit the generosity and the keenness of Paul. He would voluntarily surrender all sorts of liberty, if such a surrender was of value to a brother man, but he stood like a rock for that which he believed to be fundamental truth and wavered in no presence.

**Chapter 19. Paul in Troas and Philippi. Acts 15: 36—16: 15. About A. D. 51.**

When Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch of Syria it was with the definite intention of continuing their missionary labors in the rich field which they had opened. Their heart was burdened by the thought of the struggling churches which they had founded, which were in sore need of comfort and encouragement, and perhaps even more by the waiting world, so ready for the Gospel, to which it would be their privilege to minister.

It was Paul who made the proposition, after a short sojourn at Antioch, that they should at once revisit the churches which they had founded. Barnabas was willing but desired to take Mark along again. Paul demurred at this, for the possible reason that he thought of this revisitation as only a preliminary to a wider work, necessarily undefined in its scope. Mark had once abandoned an expedition of this sort and he did not regard him as dependable. So strenuously did they differ regarding Mark that they concluded to part company, Barnabas taking his relative, Mark, and sailing for Cyprus, where he was at home, while Paul chose a new companion, Silas, one of the two delegates from Jerusalem to the churches.

This separation was not an unmixed calamity. Each apostle had qualities of leadership, which he exercised thereafter for the benefit of the church. Moreover, Mark was apparently made more diligent and earnest by reason of Paul's disapprobation. In later days the great apostle cherished for him the deepest affection and referred to him (Col. 4: 10, 11) as of much value.

It was no small gain that Silas was added to the number of the avowed missionaries to the Gentile world. He had probably given evidence of his fitness for such work, not alone by his preference for Antioch over Jerusalem as a religious home, but by his tact and efficiency in dealing with Jewish Christians on the one hand and

with Gentile converts on the other. Like Paul he was a Hebrew of high standing, held in honor by the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:22); like him also Silas was a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37). In character he was such another as the great-hearted Barnabas, beloved of all the disciples.

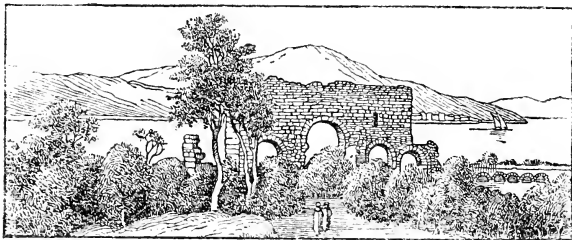
The two set out for Galatia by the overland route, visiting the churches of Syria and Cilicia by the way, passing probably through the "Cilician Gates" and coming first in order to Derbe and then to Lystra. At the latter city an event of great importance took place. Here lived Timothy, a young man of good family, whose father was a Greek. From his youth he had been trained in the Scriptures by his mother and grandmother (2 Tim. 1:5). Doubtless he had been a convert to Paul's earlier preaching and one of his active supporters, and had also been a valued member of the church in his own city, winning golden opinions from all the Christians there and in the vicinage. This young man Paul took to be his companion and helper. As a preliminary he circumcised him, not because it was an essential to salvation, but as expedient in view of their constant contact with Jews as well as Greeks. The fact that Timothy submitted to it at his age would afford the clearest evidence that both he and his spiritual father did not despise the Abrahamic covenant, and would predispose loyal Jews to listen to him. By selecting Timothy Paul added to himself a loyal and loving friend, who greatly lightened his labors and gladly shared his perils.

Wherever Paul and Silas went in Galatia they delivered the decree of the Jerusalem council and urged upon the members of the congregations a compliance with its spirit. Everywhere they found the churches in vigorous condition, growing in numbers and increasing in definiteness and fulness of faith.

Thus the little group passed through the whole region with which Paul at least was so familiar, until at last having visited Antioch of Pisidia and its outlying

churches the question was where they should go next. Paul's hopes seem to have turned toward Ephesus, the most important city of the great province of Asia, but in some way it was made clear that such a visit was not permitted by God. They then planned to spend some time in the province of Bithynia, where later on Christianity became so strongly planted, but again it was made clear that this was not the divine will. Passing therefore through Mysia they came to Troas, a Roman colony and important port of entry in northwestern Asia Minor.

The reason that led Paul to go to Troas is not made clear by the narrative, but the reason that led God to



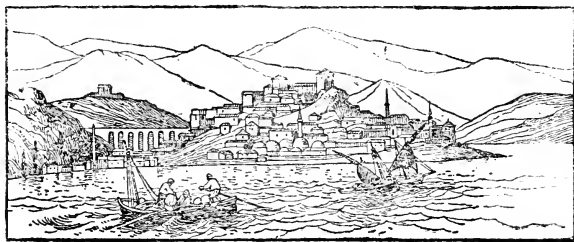
**Troas, the Place of Paul's Call to Macedonia.**

send him there is made very plain. Here he met some one who became his intimate companion, and whose diary of events was one of the most valuable sources of information utilized by the author of the book of Acts. Not all students agree in calling this unnamed companion Luke, but it seems at least highly probable that he was the Luke, the beloved physician, who played a more or less important part in the life of Paul thereafter.

At Troas Paul had a vision which defined for him the purpose of God. He saw a man of Macedonia beckoning to him and asking that he should come over and evangelize. Such a vision may well have accompanied and concluded a growing conviction formed through

conversations with men who knew the Macedonian country that the way was absolutely clear for a fruitful tour of missionary service there.

With characteristic promptness the apostle and his associates started for the opposite shore. The writer of the diary rarely fails to describe the voyages which ensued. They made a straight run to Samothrace, and on the day following came to Neapolis, the harbor of Philippi. Desiring to reach the latter city Paul did not delay at the seaport. Philippi was an interesting city, the leading one in that division of Macedonia, and with the status of a Roman *colonia*. At this city the party made quite a stay, although not as extended a visit



**Neapolis, Paul's First Landing-place in Europe.**

as they themselves desired. On the first Sabbath they sallied forth to find the place of prayer which served in place of a synagogue for the small Jewish community. Here they preached to an audience composed mainly of women, one of whom was a woman of importance, engaged in business as the agent of the purple-dyed garment makers of Thyatira. With her they found a hearty hospitality and a very sincere faith.

The independence of Lydia and her occupation impress the casual reader with surprise. But the records of those days make it very evident that women in Macedonia occupied positions of considerable freedom and of social influence combined with entire respectability. Moreover, the extent of commerce and

business transacted was very great. The business in which Lydia was engaged required a good deal of capital and she was probably prosperous.

Her household joined with her in gladly accepting the teachings of Paul, and she insisted that the missionary party should become her guests.

The dominant impression of these events upon the writer of Acts was the good guidance of God. Even the deplorable difference between Paul and Barnabas gave occasion for a wider evangelization and for the addition of two notable men to the circle of apostolic workers. Moreover, Paul's ideas grew steadily broader and more far-reaching because of a pressure which he recognized as coming from God and which prevented his settling down to tasks which seemed congenial, convenient, and promising.

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## **Chapter 20. Paul at Philippi. Acts 16: 16-40. About A. D. 51.**

One day Paul and his companions were met by a slave girl who possessed the power of sooth-saying and brought to her masters much gain by her predictions. "Her unstrung mind, rendered the more abnormal by her very belief in its own supernatural possession, was hyper-acute in its perceptions, especially as regarded the moral magnetism of strong personalities." She felt strangely moved by the presence of these great-souled men of God, and followed them for many days crying out, proclaiming that they were true servants of the Most High. Paul endured this annoyance stoically for some time, but at last, tried beyond endurance, he commanded the spirit in the name of Christ to come out of her. The result was immediate and radical and she ceased to be of any profit to her owners.

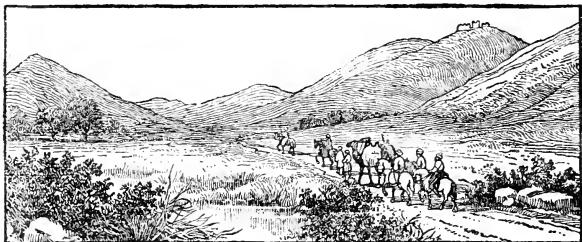


This deed put the work of the apostles into a new light. So long as they had confined themselves to preaching and social intercourse with a few women and others, no one cared to oppose them, but when they interfered with the golden harvests of some of the people, they met with bitter opposition at once. The men who had owned the slave lost their comfortable income. She no longer had any power, and people ceased to come to her to have their fortunes told or to get help in finding things that they had lost. This deprivation angered them and they haled Paul and Silas before the rulers of the city.

The charge brought against the apostles was that they, being Jews, were disturbing the city and urging customs which no Roman could receive or observe. It was intentionally vague, yet skilfully worded. With the reputation which the city must necessarily sustain it was a dangerous charge. Paul and Silas were given no real chance to defend themselves. The prætors or magistrates, spurred on apparently by the clamors of the mob which the accusers had raised, commanded that they be stripped and given a cruel scourging. Amidst the confusion no protests could be heard, or if heard they were unheeded. It was the judgment of a mob, not a deliberate trial by judges who asked for evidence.

There was a widespread prejudice against all Jews, which made this act of violence possible. Romans and Greeks alike felt for the race only hatred and contempt. This was due in part to the cleverness and business acumen of the Jew, which made him the easy superior of any rival in commercial intercourse, and in part, also, to the attitude of exclusiveness and to the peculiar practices of the Jew. Only a renegade Jew could be a true companion for a Roman or Greek. So little impression had been made on Philippi as a city by the missionaries that the inhabitants made no discrimination whatever between Paul and Silas and any other Jews, although these men represented a wholly different attitude toward the world.

The fierceness of the mob and the high-handed action of the prætors finds explanation in the character of the city. Its inhabitants, whether native Greeks or Roman colonists, were people of privilege, who were proud of their position. The introduction of any elements of disturbance they would not tolerate for an instant, lest



**The Site of Philippi.**

they seem unfaithful to the imperial trust and lose the distinction in which they took such pride.

After the scourging the hapless prisoners were thrust into the prison with a command to the jailer to keep them safely. He then, to make sure, placed them in the most secure portion of the jail, a small cell without openings except the doorway, and fastened their feet in stocks.

No situation could be less inviting, but the brave souls of the prisoners were not depressed. Rather were they seeking strength in prayer and praise to God when an earthquake shook the prison, opened the doors, and released the prisoners. As Ramsay has remarked, no one who is familiar with Turkish prisons to-day, which do not differ materially from public prisons of the Oriental past, need wonder at the results. The earthquake by forcing the door posts apart would cause the bars to drop out, and by loosening the stones in the rough prison wall would detach the chains or stocks which secured the prisoners.

Awed by the earthquake, the prisoners scarcely had time to realize that they might escape when the jailer,

awakened suddenly, saw that the outer door was open. Rather than meet the disgraceful penalty of remissness he would have committed suicide, but Paul from the inner room called out that all were present, and stayed his purpose. Calling for lights, and going to the inner prison, the trembling jailer did his best to show his reverence for Paul and Silas. He was convinced that the maiden had spoken truly concerning them, and that they were real messengers of God. He was within his rights in treating them kindly, since they were merely in his custody until the morning. His heart was now open to their teachings, and both he and his household became glad and eager followers of the Lord.

The next morning early the prætors sent their lictors with an order to release the two prisoners, which the jailer transmitted to them. But to slip away in such fashion, as if glad to be released and as if accepting a boon, was not the way of Paul. He stood upon his rights, thinking, no doubt, for his converts and their standing in the city as well as for himself. He declared that the prætors had violated all law and justice in dealing with them, free Roman citizens, without investigating the charges against them. These words humbled the prætors and caused them to come in person and release the prisoners, apologizing for their own disregard of law. They then urged Paul and Silas to leave the city, with which request, after conferring with the disciples and exhorting them to remain faithful, they complied.

Short as was their stay at Philippi, it had been worth while. A church had been founded which was loyally and continuously active for many years. The converts were mostly Greeks. One was a business woman of good standing, one a jailer, with their dependents. The congregation with its leaders was a striking illustration of the universality of the Gospel of Christ.

Apparently it enlarged the thought of Paul until he began to study the evangelization of the great Roman world. The mob, the scourging, the unfair magistrates,

were all as nothing to such as he, in view of those, though they were few, who had become genuine followers of Christ.

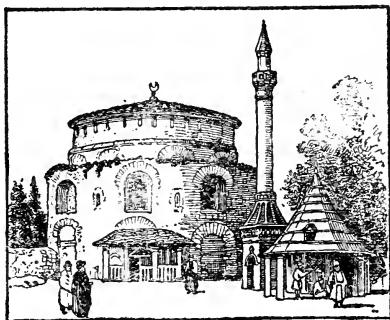
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**Chapter 21. Paul at Thessalonica and Berea. Acts 17: 1-15; 1 Thes. 2: 1-12. About A. D. 52.**

With heavy hearts the little company must have left Philippi, where they had found so warm a welcome. The loyalty of the church which began in the household of Lydia was marked and strong. For years to come in manifold ways it ministered to the great apostle (Phil. 1: 5; 4: 15, 16) in times of need, not alone by material gifts but by manifestations of comradeship and interest. Probably it would be fair to say that the church at Philippi was on the whole the one for which Paul cherished the deepest affection and in which he placed the most unswerving confidence.

They passed along westward over the famous road, the Via Egnatia of Horace, which was the continuation through Macedonia of the Appian Way. Had Paul thought of it, he was on his way directly to Rome. But at the present he thought rather of the cities near at hand. The narrative refers to their passage through Amphipolis and Apollonia, cities at natural stages of the hundred mile journey to Thessalonica. Amphipolis was a natural rival of Philippi, disputing with it the pre-eminence. It is not at all impossible that Paul and his party preached in these cities, since Acts does not purport to relate more than a part of Paul's work. Moreover there are references in his letters to the churches of these parts, which fairly imply the founding of more than three or four in Macedonia. But in any case the stop in these cities could not have been long; the apostle was really aiming at the political and commercial center of Macedonia.

Thessalonica was then, as now and since Paul's day, a city of natural importance. Founded about 300 B. C., it became in 146 B. C. the real capital of the region. It was situated at the head of the gulf of Salonica, the natural distributing center for the imports and exports of a large and populous region, a Roman naval station, in direct communication with West and East by land or sea. Because of its support Octavius made Thessalonica a free city ruled by its own



**Ancient Church in Thessalonica.**

assembly (Acts 17:6) and by its own magistrates, the "politarchs." When Paul reached the city he found it populous and prosperous. Being such a commercial center, Thessalonica had attracted a large colony of Jews, who had built a synagogue. Naturally the missionaries went first to this place of advantage and began to declare their message. Judaism seems to have made a better impression at Thessalonica than at Philippi, since through the synagogue Paul came into ready contact with the better classes among the Greeks.

The narrative of Acts taken by itself would perhaps lead the reader to suppose that the apostles were at Thessalonica only three weeks or so. But the fourth verse of chapter seventeen must cover at least as many months. Ramsay thinks that the party remained at Thessalonica about six months. Philippians 4:16 and 1 Thessalonians 1:8 clearly imply a far longer period than a few weeks. It is highly probable that after three Sabbaths of preaching in the synagogue, the opposition of the more rigid Jews became so pronounced that Paul

was obliged to carry on his work in other ways. By that time he had won the respect and attention of the enlightened and responsive Greeks of culture and refinement, who had formerly repaired to the synagogue, and thus was able to inaugurate a work of real and permanent importance. He founded a church chiefly of Gentiles (1 Thes. 1:9) which began to co-operate with him boldly from the very start. Into this work Paul threw his whole soul (1 Thes. 2:8,9).

In course of time the hostile Jews determined to drive Paul from the city. They persecuted him and his converts (1 Thes. 1:6; 2:2, 14-16; 3:3) in many ways without avail. Finally they hired or excited a number of the rabble which is readily available in any large commercial center, gathered a mob and stirred up a riot, assaulting the house of Jason, the leading member of the Christian church, hoping to find Paul and his associates there.

Not finding the missionaries at Jason's house, the mob dragged him with other prominent Christians before the politarchs, as the rulers of Thessalonica were called. This title is not a common one and its use threw for a long time some suspicion upon the accuracy of the narrative of Acts. Research, however, has confirmed the declaration that the magistrates of Thessalonica had this peculiar designation.

The charge which Paul's opponents made before these politarchs was one to which the magistrates were very sensitive. It was not, as at Philippi, a charge that they were introducing religious innovations, but a much more serious matter. It was declared that the missionaries were bent on treasonable agitation. The Roman rulers were so afraid of such political disturbance that they punished severely the slightest indications of a revolt, whether apparent or real.

The magistrates seem to have been unconvinced of the guilt of Paul and his company, but they dared not refuse to take action. They came to an ingenious and, for Paul, perplexing solution of the matter. They put

the leading Christians under bonds to keep the peace, and dismissed the case. Probably a part of the contract was the departure of Paul from the city. At least he writes later on to the Thessalonian church that "once and again" he was only prevented from visiting them "by Satan." By this he must mean some device so crafty and effectual that it must have been inspired by the devil himself. Such would have been the arrangement that his return would involve the leaders of the church in legal penalties.

From Thessalonica the party went to Berœa, where for a while the work went very well. The Jews of Berœa were less jealous and unreasonable than those of Thessalonica. They were eager to consider Paul's instruction. Here, too, many of the better class of the Greek population became deeply interested. But when the Thessalonian Jews heard of Paul's successful work in Berœa, they sent emissaries who aroused another mob against him and drove him from the city, doubtless under the same charge that occasioned his expulsion from Thessalonica.

From the letters written by Paul to his churches at Philippi and at Thessalonica we know that an extensive work was promoted at this time and later throughout the Macedonian region. Either Paul visited more than the three cities mentioned in Acts, or he made these cities the working center of a far-reaching activity. Probably the latter was the actual course of action. It was the method of evangelization organized by Paul in the province of Asia from Ephesus as a center, later on, a method fully approved by him. Paul planted himself in the large commercial centers, where men were always coming and going. Many of them became his messengers.

There is reason to think that he regarded the synagogue preaching mainly as introductory to the wider audience of thoughtful Greeks whom he longed to evangelize. For them in particular he had a message, which set his heart aglow.

Neither he nor his companions counted the rough usage of these months as an indication that the work should cease. It was rather an indication that results were being achieved of such moment that their enemies were becoming vindictive. The best evidence, often, for a movement for evangelization or for reform is the character of the opposition it arouses.

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**Chapter 22. Paul's Address at Athens. Acts 17 : 16-34.  
About A. D. 52.**

By his hurried exit from Berea Paul brought apparently to an abrupt close his work in Macedonia. But we have seen evidence that it had already been more firmly established and more broadly extended than the meagre narrative of the book of Acts would lead us to infer. The great apostle had really accomplished a second great provincial foundation, the one for which he afterward cherished the tenderest affection.

He went to the coast, leaving Silas and Timothy at Berea, and probably uncertain as to his own movements, but on reaching the harbor, twenty miles away, he determined to go to Athens. From there he sent word to them to join him as speedily as possible. After they reached him, he despatched Timothy to visit and encourage the Thessalonian church (1 Thes. 3 : 1, 2) and bring him word again; and probably sent Silas on a similar errand to some other Macedonian church, perhaps the one at Philippi, for we are told of their rejoining him at Corinth a few weeks later (Acts 18 : 5).

He was practically alone at Athens, and had there a unique and humbling experience. There is some reason to think that he needed or at least strongly craved constant companionship. He should have reached the city refreshed by the easy voyage of two hundred miles, all the time in sight of land and with noble mountain ranges within view.

Paul could not long remain quiet. He soon began



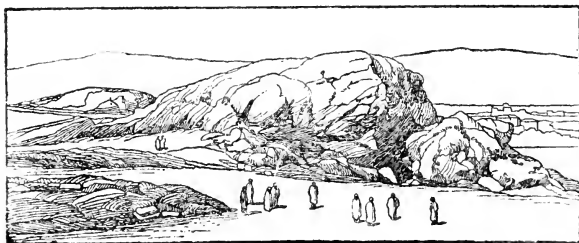
to examine the city in which he found himself. He was well used to Greek cities, but Athens represented a type which exceeded them all. Stokes has called attention to the description of Athens made by Pausanias within the century following Paul's visit and when the city was practically unchanged from its aspect in Paul's day. In that century Athens was at the very height of its literary glory and architectural splendor. It was the leading university city of the world, adorned by admiring devotees of science and philosophy with temples, palace and statues.

These manifestations of outward splendor and beauty aroused in the great apostle a sort of horror at the completeness with which these philosophers and their devotees were given up to the contemplation of the purely æsthetic or the merely superficial aspects of the divine life in the world. He was no stranger to university ways, having been familiar with and probably a student of the university of Tarsus, reputed to be the third greatest in the world of his day. But his interest in the academical glories of the city was overmastered by his indignation at its spiritual condition. It was packed with images. He understood of course the real purpose of these statues, but was made sick at heart by his realization of the character of the religion which took delight in them. As usual he began at once to take part in the life around him as opportunity offered, in the synagogues among the Jews and the proselytes, and in the Agora among those with whom he could converse. The Agora was the busy central square of the city, lined with beautiful porticoes, adorned with priceless statues, crowded at all hours with a varied group of men of every nationality, every one in search of a new sensation. Some of the leaders among them were among his hearers, and either they or the bystanders made the petulant remark that Paul was but one who aped the ways and words of true philosophers, retailing their views at second hand. Still others, misunderstanding what he said about Jesus and His resurrection, thought

that he was talking about two more gods. Ramsay thinks that the recognized guild of lecturers at the university, looking on Paul as a new candidate for their privileges, then brought him before the Areopagus, or council, which meeting not on the hill necessarily but also in the Agora, could take cognizance of questions bearing on public teaching in the city. Before this august body they desired him to state his case. Surrounded by these critics and listened to by others who were idly interested, he responded to their request to explain more in full his point of view and teaching.

The passing remark of the author about Athenian interest in novelties was very keen and characteristic. They were restlessly inquisitive, as their own great orator, Demosthenes, once declared. But Paul thereby had his chance, which he was very eager to improve to the utmost, to declare unto them the God whom he served.

This Areopagus address is the only recorded address delivered to an educated Greek audience. It can hardly



**The Areopagus, Athens.**

have been the only one, and it must have been a fairly representative one. It was clearly an address rather than a defense, and made with consummate skill in view of the varieties of culture and belief in the audience. More than that, it is a broad and generous recognition of the best that is in the natural man along with a searching avowal of the realities of sin and judgment.

Its reception gives the clearest evidence of the spiritual poverty of the pagan religious thought of the time.

Paul began by expressly commending their religious zeal, their great respect for things divine. He instanced among other objects of worship which had attracted his notice an altar inscribed to "AN UNKNOWN GOD," and declared that the deity thus blindly and vaguely worshiped was the very One about whom he came to preach. He was not, however, a Deity to be noted with scant attention. He was the one true God, Maker of the universe, unconfined in space or time, in need of nothing but loyal service from the world of His creation,



**Altar to an Unknown God.**

for which He manifests a loving providence, thereby helping toward the light of conviction and contact those who are stretching out feeble hands of faith and groping their way along. In Him men discover the true significance of life. Being His spiritual children, how assuredly ought men to scorn the unworthy representatives of the Godhead suggested by the images! Such devices might have been excused in the olden days of ignorance, but now God calls upon all men to come into direct personal relationship to Him, forsaking all that will hinder; and He will hold men to their responsibility for the truth proclaimed through Him whom He raised from the dead.

Paul's mention of a resurrection was greeted with scoffing and evasion. At best he had made a slight impression upon his audience. The philosophers regarded him as a religious enthusiast, too much in earnest to be of a true philosophical temper. Paul's experience had enlightened him as well. He saw that

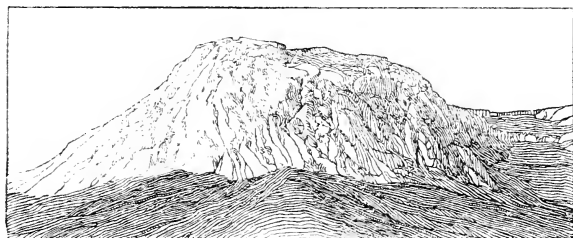
his audience took delight in unpractical discussion, and that one who preached to them must confine himself to the simple natural realities of sin, its bondage and deliverance.

The accredited results of his brief stay at Athens were meagre. Dionysius seems to have been a man of high standing, but he had no associates. A church was ultimately founded at Athens, but probably not by Paul, who at least makes no further reference to one. On the whole he seems to have been grievously disappointed by the outcome of his visit. He had done his best, adapting himself with dignity, aptness and force to those whom he would persuade, only to find them unconcerned and unmoved.

But Paul's extremity became God's opportunity. Paul's very humiliation led him to determine to deal with all men as needy sinners to whom he would carry a simple Gospel. Thus began a new phase of his wonderful career.

**Chapter 23. Paul's Long Stay at Corinth. Acts 18:1-22; 1 Cor. 2:1-3:2. About A. D. 52-54.**

Paul had probably intended to remain at Athens until his companions could rejoin him; but in view of the slight impression which he was able to make upon that self-admiring city, he abandoned his purpose and went to Corinth, some forty-five miles away, the political and commercial capital of Achaia. From the standpoint of location, near the neck of land between the eastern and the western seas, and of importance, Corinth far outclassed Athens, although the latter never



**The Acro-Corinthus, at Corinth.**

The temple of Venus, the chief deity of Corinth, was on the summit of this hill.

lost its intellectual ascendancy. Corinth was a city devoted to business and to pleasure. It had a population which represented the whole Mediterranean shore. Externally very beautiful and abounding in material wealth, it was noted for open, unblushing profligacy of every sort. The city has been called the London and Paris combined of the first century.

At Corinth Paul found a congenial friend, Aquila, a Jew born in Pontus, who had long been a citizen of Rome. The emperor Claudius had issued an edict against the Jews which led to their departure from Rome and settlement in Corinth. (Apparently this edict was never fully executed because of the numbers of Jews in Rome.) Whether Aquila was a Christian

when in Rome is uncertain, but not unlikely. His wife Priscilla was evidently a woman of refinement and education. She is given a prominence in the New Testament which testifies indirectly to her ability and influence. The apostle, being largely dependent on his own exertions for support, and going for work to the haunts of the tent makers, came quickly and naturally into contact with these fellow citizens, who proved to be such helpful companions.

As usual Paul began at the synagogue, preaching earnestly and aiming to persuade all whom he found there, both Jews and proselytes, of the truth of his message. After a time he was joined by Silas and Timothy (whereupon he became completely absorbed in the work of preaching). Their message of cheer may have heartened him so that he seemed to redouble his energies. In the first epistle to the Corinthians, Paul declares that when he went to Corinth it was to preach a straightforward, simple message of salvation through the crucified Christ. All thought of a philosophical presentation of truth he set aside, and addressed himself to the plain convictions of men as he met them.

A more than usually determined opposition among the Jews was encountered by him at this time. Some of them put themselves in bitter opposition, so that Paul at last lost all patience, and with a gesture which emphasized his idea he declared that he would no longer continue his attempt to preach the Gospel to them, but would turn with a clear conscience to the welcoming Gentiles.

Paul no longer made use of the synagogue but *set up* an opposition place of worship next door with a former ruler of the synagogue as one of his prominent converts. Ramsay remarks that Titus Justus, his host, was evidently a Latin of the *coloni* in Corinth. Through him Paul was doubtless able to get a hearing among the more cultivated citizens of Corinth.

In due time he had great success in his Corinthian ministry, but it was achieved amid many discouragement.

ments. His vision of encouragement implied that he had some reason to fear opposition. That this was exceedingly bitter one would infer from some of the expressions in Thessalonians, written by Paul at about this time. Paul does not refer more specifically to these experiences; but his words in First Corinthians 2:3, "And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling," imply that they were such as to give pause to most men, and sufficient to affect even the stout-hearted apostle.

But as at other critical moments of his career, the apostle received from God an assurance of protection and support which gave him courage to endure and labor on. With continuing confidence he prolonged his ministry in Corinth for many months. It was a very successful ministry. Paul won a great number of disciples and left behind him a well-organized and enduring church. He drew his converts from all ranks of society, but in the main from the poor and humble. "Not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble." As a church, however, they included some men of capacity and influence. Moreover, the community was able to be generous to the brethren at Jerusalem, and therefore could not have been poverty-stricken.

Such success as this among the Gentile population so inflamed his Jewish opponents that they attempted to get Paul into trouble by accusing him before the judgment seat of Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia. Gallio was the brother of Seneca, the famous philosopher. He was an easy-going, affable man, and the Jews possibly supposed that he could readily be deceived. But he seems to have penetrated their motives and to have been undisturbed by their insinuations. He was no country magistrate, fearful of being reported as lax in maintaining the honor of the state. Declaring that their hostility to Paul was a matter only of concern to them and not in the least of concern to the empire, he dismissed the complaint and had them driven from his

court. The discomfiture of Paul's opposers was complete, when the Greek rabble, delighted at their rejection by the proconsul, seized their leader, Sosthenes, and gave him a severe beating in the very presence of Gallio, who did not interfere.

There was considerable significance in the attitude of Gallio. It indicated nothing as to his attitude toward Christianity itself; it merely exhibited the fundamental policy of Rome to give the right to freedom of speech and action, so long as they were consistent with loyalty to Rome. Such a decision made Christianity's pathway an open one, and its range as wide as the civilized world. Ramsay is right, therefore, in regarding this episode as noting an epoch not alone in Paul's career but in the development of Christianity. It created a most valuable precedent.

A while after this episode Paul took leave of the church which had grown so dear to him and sailed for Syria. With him went his two beloved and loyal friends, Aquila and Priscilla. At the harbor of Cenchreæ Paul cut his hair, which had been allowed to grow long during the fulfilling of some vow, such as people made freely in his day. It may have been in connection with his own safety at Corinth that he made it.

Reaching Ephesus he left his companions there, but before departing southward he preached in the synagogue. Much, no doubt, to his own surprise, the Jews received him cordially and urged him to remain awhile. He felt the pressure of duty, however, and merely promised that he would return. Going on to Cæsarea, he went up hastily to Jerusalem and then returned to Antioch. Thus concluded a long, adventurous and most fruitful tour, which had established two new groups of churches.

The assuring vision in Corinth represented the dominant impression of the tour. His life was being directed and protected by a power which exceeded his own or that of his foes, to which he could trust. No

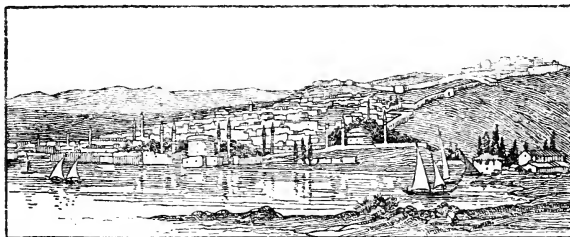


wonder that his ideas broadened and his courage deepened. The world could not resist a friendly attack of such a combination.

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**Chapter 24. Paul's Letters to the Church at Thessalonica.**  
**Selections from 1 Thessalonians. Written from Corinth, about A. D. 53.**

The return of Timothy from Thessalonica, whither he had gone to visit the little church and bring Paul word of its condition, was a joyful event for the great apostle. It gave him assurance that his work there had not been in vain, and that although, as he had feared, the little Christian community had been exposed to much persecution, it had bravely withstood all attacks and even been active in evangelistic labors. He was



*From a photograph.*

**Thessalonica, Modern Salonica.**

likewise reassured in regard to the personal regard of the church for him as its spiritual father. Its members were eager to see him and were thoroughly loyal.

It is evident that Timothy reported to Paul that the Thessalonians were discussing the question whether those who died before the coming of the Lord would share in the glories of that day. Like other Christians of that age, Paul, in fact, being among the number, they were expecting a not distant coming of Christ and a conclusion of the existing world. They all inter-

preted the declaration of Jesus in regard to His future manifestations in a most literal way. Since the Thessalonian Christians believed that the coming of the Lord was not far ahead, they had an additional reason for mourning the death of one of their number, who would thereby be deprived of the joy of welcoming his Lord and the new dispensation. The immediate cause of Paul's delightful letter was, consequently, the relief of this anxiety.

First Thessalonians was unquestionably written at Corinth. The apostle, Silas and Timothy (1 Thes. 1:1) are together. Timothy (1 Thes. 3:6) had just returned from a visit to Thessalonica (Acts 18:5), bringing the assurances which rejoiced Paul's heart. He also reported the incidental trials which the Christian community were bearing so bravely and the perplexities over which they were concerned. The sympathies of the thoughtful and loving apostle were kindled, so that he wrote to the church without delay this affectionate, inspiring letter, so ideal in its combination of direct instruction with inspiring suggestion that the church could never let it cease to be used as a stimulus to Christian growth.

This letter began with an expression of thanksgiving to God for the splendid qualities which they had manifested since their conversion—their faith and love and steadfastness. From the outset their religious life had been strong. They had not merely listened to Paul's preaching with eagerness, but had shown in abundance every proof of spiritual power. Despite the sufferings they, like their Lord and His apostle, had been obliged to endure, they had been the means, through their cheerful resoluteness, of preaching the Gospel wherever Greek speaking peoples were to be found. Paul had no need of telling elsewhere the story of their conversion. He found it everywhere known that he had won them to Christ from their idols and that they had come to believe in the resurrection and the second coming of Christ and in His saving work.

Paul then recalled the circumstances of his first visit to Thessalonica. It was well that he had come there, bruised but not disheartened, ready to begin again the work of preaching. No base motives kept him at that task, but an assurance of a message for men and of responsibility to God for its delivery. He did not seek selfishly to please others or to gratify himself, or to claim the consideration which was his natural due. Instead he dealt with them tenderly, imparting, along with the message of truth, as it were his heart too. He had no mercenary motive, for he toiled zealously early and late to support himself. They could themselves testify to his pure and righteous life among them, not that of a master with his disciples, but of a father with his children, seeking to warn, encourage, and enlighten them, training them for adequate serviceableness to God.

They had received his message of repentance and salvation as a call from God to righteousness and steadfastness, and had bravely endured all manner of persecution from their countrymen, such as the Jewish Christians suffered in Judea. Paul had longed to see them many a time, but was prevented in a way that grieved his very soul. He had therefore despatched Timothy to visit them and give them comfort. They had reason to anticipate affliction, and Paul feared for their constancy as untried Christians. Judge, therefore, of his delight when Timothy reported such endurance and affection. It gave him a new lease of life, and new occasions for thanksgiving. The apostle cherished two great desires, to see them face to face and to know of their Christian perfection.

The apostle then addressed himself to certain evils of character to which the Greeks were particularly liable. In the fulness of Christian experience to which they were called there was no room for unchastity or sharp practice. Brotherly love they had already manifested. He exhorted them to make it grow and to be ambitious to exhibit it as a normal element in a peaceable, industrious and independent life.

He then referred to the matter that was troubling them, assuring them that those believers who had died would have an equal share with those who were alive at Christ's second coming. The order of events would be that first the Lord would come from heaven with accompaniments denoting His power; secondly would be the resurrection of the Christian dead; then those who were alive would be made to enter into a blessed and eternal fellowship with Christ. That day will come unexpectedly, but those who are looking for it will not be afraid.

Some valuable practical hints conclude this letter, which must have been followed after no long interval by the second one. Paul's teaching in his first letter had apparently been misunderstood in some particulars. The Thessalonians had inferred that the Lord's coming was to be expected at once, and in consequence some had ceased to work and were giving themselves to gossip and folly (2 Thes. 3:10-12). Paul wished to set them right in the matter.

In the second letter he corrected the misapprehensions aroused by the first. They were not to cease from daily performance of duty because of the coming of Christ, but to remain continuously fruitful.

These are two remarkable letters. They reveal the great soul of the apostle. He wished his spiritual children to attain to real heights of experience, to "abound" in all things. He believed in recognizing fully what they had already achieved, as a basis for encouraging them to more earnest efforts.

There are many problems to-day just as acute. We are often tempted to cease our efforts for their solution. Paul's advice would be to make the best of the situation and to keep on working and praying.

**Chapter 25. Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia.  
Selections from Galatians. Written about A.D. 53  
or 54. Place uncertain.**

To set a date for this wonderful letter of the great apostle is not easy, since the essential conditions might have been fulfilled at various times. Paul somehow heard that the Judaizers (Acts 15:1, 24) had again gotten among his converts and were poisoning their minds against him and inculcating their narrow ideals as those which were alone fitting for genuine Christians.

They were declaring that he was a sort of second-hand apostle. He had not, they claimed, been with the Master during His ministry. He had gotten his information and ideas from the others, who had had better advantages. How absurd for him to set up his opinions in contradiction to theirs who went in and out with Jesus! Yet they all were good Jews, being careful to keep the law, while Paul was seeking to ignore it.

The Judaizers must have stated in effect that while there might be salvation without circumcision, yet a first-class Christian would seek to keep the whole Mosaic law. Do not all the leaders of the church do thus, they would say; was not Jesus careful to maintain the ordinances? Is Paul likely to be right in this matter, standing, as he does, practically alone?

These specious arguments had made great havoc of the group of churches in Galatia which were so dear to Paul. Possibly he got word of the situation through Timothy, who went up from Ephesus and rejoined Paul in Antioch of Syria. A flame of indignation arose in his soul over the meanness of the tactics of his opponents and the strange forgetfulness of his disciples. He wrote while at white heat a letter to the latter which for directness and vigor and dignity could hardly be surpassed.

We must not be unfair to the Judaizers in our sympathy for the position which Paul took. It was

but natural that among the earliest Christians there should be many sincere believers in Christ who could not forget their training from childhood in the belief that God approved of men in proportion to their strict observance of the Mosaic law. It is easier for some minds to estimate religion through its forms than through its principles. They had adopted a new principle, but had never realized the consequences. They did not dream of denying that faith in Christ was essential to every Christian, but they insisted that the keeping of the law was just as essential to the completeness of the Christian life.

Paul therefore had a great doctrinal point to argue and this was the leading motive for his letter, but he sought first of all to meet the petty insinuations regarding himself by which his opponents had sought to weaken his influence over his Galatian converts. He addressed himself at once to the question of his own authority, independence, consistency and fulness of experience.

The salutation (1:1-5) of the letter was not to be misunderstood. "As an apostle who received his commission and his message from none other than the risen Lord Himself, I give you greeting in the name of Jesus Christ, who sacrificed Himself for our thorough-going deliverance from the bondage of sin." Paul thus announced his double thesis that his message was God-given and that it was adequate.

All students of Galatians have noted the omission of the customary courteous acknowledgment of the divine goodness toward Paul's correspondents or toward himself or the expression of his thankfulness, which we find in other letters written by Paul. The stress under which he wrote is indicated by the abruptness with which he began. He was amazed that they were giving heed to a new gospel and pronounced a curse upon any one responsible for its introduction.

By an autobiographical review of the facts relating to his first presentation of the Gospel to the Galatians he

proceeded to show that it was not derived from any earthly source. Before his conversion he was an over-zealous Jew. Immediately thereafter he retired to Arabia. In the third year he made a brief visit to Peter at Jerusalem. In the fourteenth year he again went to Jerusalem to confer with the apostles, and was treated by them as their equal, charged with a Gospel for the Gentiles. At another time, when Peter at Antioch yielded to the criticisms of these Judaizers, Paul was independent enough to reprove him to his face in public.

Paul's summary of what he said to Peter on that occasion shades imperceptibly into a general consideration of the basis on which Gentiles and Jews alike would be assured of salvation. Its ideas are repeated in the chapters which follow.

The apostle now addresses himself directly to his hearers. He planned to show them that, as a matter of fact, his Gospel had been effective in bringing them into the spiritual life. "Were you not, O Galatians, converted at the beginning? Do you need to begin the slavery of the works of the law in order to attain a higher stage of religious life? As Abraham's faith was counted to him for righteousness, so your faith in Jesus was counted to you. Men of faith are sons of Abraham. Now a covenant, or will, must be maintained. The promises were made by God to Abraham and to his seed. His true seed was Christ, that is, the whole body of Christians, who are therefore the heirs of the promises. The law was given by God as a preparation for the fulfilment of the promises. It promoted a clear consciousness of sin. It has been a sort of guardian keeping charge of us until the day of Christ should come. Every heir needs such guardianship; moreover, as children we must be guided under rules. When Christ came into the world, it was to assure men of sonship and possession. Should we then voluntarily return to the old bondage? You seem to be so doing.

"On my first visit you gave me an unusually cordial

reception and rejoiced over your good fortune. Am I your enemy when I warn you of faults existing among you? These missionaries are zealous indeed, but not to your real advantage.

"You suppose that the Jews are the true sons of Abraham and that you ought to make yourselves like them. But the Scriptures referring to this must be treated allegorically, not literally. The Jews, enslaved to the law, are the children of Hagar; we Christians are sons of Sarah and children of the promise. As Isaac was persecuted by Ishmael, so are we by the Jews. Our deliverance from sin was that we might be spiritually free.

"If you adopt circumcision you commit yourselves to the legal method of salvation and must go on to do all that the law requires. Circumcision itself is nothing, but it proves that you no longer trust to Christ. Who drew you into this disloyalty? Surely, no messenger of God! I am sure that you will recover your sense, but your leader will be properly punished. Would that all such might dispose of themselves!

"As Christians you are free. Be not, however, lawless, but lovingly helpful. Those who are disputations cannot maintain fellowship.

"My advice is: Make the Spirit your guide and you will not live the sensual life. They are in conflict, but the spirit will be victorious. You can see on every side the vices which come from gratifying natural impulse and how incompatible they are with membership in the kingdom. Notice also the fruitage of the Spirit which needs no law for its realization. Let us therefore determine to make the spiritual life our own.

"The law of love requires kindly and thoughtful treatment of one who has sinned. Share each other's sorrows and cares. Remember your obligations to all men, particularly to the Christian brethren.

"The Judaizers desire your circumcision that they may prove their zeal. I glory only in the cross of Christ, in whom is newness of life. The proof that I



am His I carry on my scarred body. His grace be with you all."

This letter is scarcely argumentative; it is rather invigorative. It appealed to their quickened consciences. Its glorious keynote is Christian freedom. Its distinctive purpose was to protest against the idea that Gentile Christians would attain a higher grade of spiritual development by becoming obedient to the law. It saved the growing Gentile church from shipwreck.

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## **Chapter 26. The Planting of the Gentile Churches in Galatia, Macedonia and Greece : A Review.**

The series of events from the conversion of Saul of Tarsus to the end of the second missionary tour cover approximately twenty years. Half of the period was spent in comparative obscurity; during the other half he was growing by leaps and bounds into great prominence as the acknowledged leader of Gentile Christians.

Looking backward from the standpoint of his missionary service one can see the great value of his training as a young man and as a waiting disciple. He came to know Judaism through and through, and from the inside. It was his life. Taught by its noblest scholars, associating with its acknowledged leaders, set apart for its important missions, selected finally as its defender, Saul was possessed of all that Judaism had to offer by way of experience or instruction. As one of its chosen champions he learned in active debate against men like Stephen to use every argument which in later years he would need to be able to refute. As a young man favored by the Jewish leaders and populace alike he became intimately acquainted, stranger to Jerusalem as he was, with the plans and feelings of those who controlled Judaism.

But keen as must have been the disappointment of these leaders when they heard that Saul of Tarsus had joined the hated sect of Nazarenes, not even they could realize the significance of the act. His conversion was important. From it, as Ramsay urges, he thenceforth dated the occurrences of his life. But of even greater importance, so far as his future work was concerned, were the years which intervened before Barnabas sought him out at Tarsus and took him to Antioch. These were years of readjustment and ripening, spent mainly in comparative obscurity, yet Saul filled them full of experience. He went to Antioch a man remarkably trained for service with Gentiles and Jews alike, for a ministry to the churches or for diplomatic struggles with Jews or Judaizers. At that time he could hardly have been fully conscious of his mission to the Gentiles except so far as he realized that he would be unable to work in Palestine and for his fellow countrymen. Such a passage as Acts 26:17, 18 may express a commission, which began at that moment to be realized, although it was not consciously executed until after the lapse of years.

At Antioch Barnabas and Saul worked with such success and were so manifestly fitted for evangelizing enterprise, that in due time the church solemnly ordained them to go forth to the regions beyond. Apparently their first plan was a tour through Cyprus, across to the main land and down along the coast to Antioch again.

Now, at last, Saul was where he belonged. He took the leadership at once, became known by his Gentile name rather than by his Jewish one, and gave himself in whole-souled fashion to the work. Having completed the tour of Cyprus and reached the Pamphilian coast, the apostles determined for some reason, perhaps Paul's physical need, to go to the highlands of Pisidia. In the cities of this region, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe, with their dependencies, Paul and Barnabas did a notable and significant work. Not

alone did they win large numbers to the Christian faith, principally Gentiles, but they definitely concluded that God was setting them apart for such service. Their work was thorough-going. It resulted in the organization of churches which were permanent and vigorous. Paul was no novice. He knew his people and he knew his own mind. In the letter to the Galatians (1:6, 8, 9, 11, 12) he refers to the Gospel which he preached to them at the first, that is, at this visit. It was the message of redemption through the crucified Christ (Gal. 3:1) to the life of the Spirit. They received it and gave abundant manifestations of its hold upon their lives.

When Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch of Syria with the story of the triumphs of the Gospel among the Gentiles it produced both rejoicing and concern. The more liberal Christians, especially those who were of non-Jewish birth, were unfeignedly glad. Those, however, who had been trained as strict Jews and still conformed rigidly to the law were troubled. They rested upon the divine origin of the law and concluded that it would be needful for all Gentiles to adopt its regulations in order to become true Christians. Paul and Barnabas strenuously resisted any such declarations. The question was one of prime importance and was finally discussed at Jerusalem by a delegation from the Antioch church, headed by the two apostles. At this council a reasonable spirit prevailed. The facts of the actual conversion of Gentiles in great numbers and of their spiritual living could not be gainsaid. It was therefore agreed to receive the Galatian Christians as true brethren, urging them merely to refrain from practices which would distress and outrage their Jewish associates.

The way was thus made wide open for a continuation of the work of evangelization. The apostles could not long remain at Antioch, when their duty was so clear. Dividing their forces because of the unseasonable strife regarding Mark, Barnabas went to Cyprus, while Paul,

taking Silas as his comrade and selecting Timothy as a helper, began a second great enterprise. He had planned to preach at and near Ephesus, but God had other plans for him. Baffled in one purpose and another, he was led along through Asia Minor until he came to Troas, where the meaning of his experiences became clear. God intended that he should enter Macedonia.

The campaign in Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea involved much hardship for Paul and Silas, but led to permanent and valuable results. The Macedonian churches became strongholds of Christianity, centers of evangelistic activity and active supporters of Paul in his work elsewhere.

Forced out of that region by circumstances which he could not control, Paul went to Athens and Corinth. In the former city, following the precedents of his varied life, he sought to adapt himself to his environment, and present his message in a way which would appeal to those of philosophical temperament. He discovered that the philosophers were more concerned over speculative questions than over a change of heart and life, and that they would not listen to instruction which opposed their preconceptions. Departing to Corinth, Paul gave himself to a plain, straightforward appeal to the hearts of those who heard him. His work was chiefly among the Greeks. When the Jews sought to bring it to an end, they were stayed by the clear-sighted justice of Rome, whose representative would not lend his aid to persecution.

Thus to three great regions, not counting the churches of Syria and Cilicia, Paul introduced the Gospel during a decade or so. Well might he have been satisfied with what he had accomplished, but his vision enlarged with each new conquest of faith. He now realized that Christianity was of universal scope, adapted to all peoples. He thought of Rome, the center of the political world, as the natural point of departure for the world's evangelization.

His experiences had taught him that human opposi-

tion could be absolutely ignored. His was a divinely directed work. At times of crises his way had been and would be made clear. In this confidence he advanced serenely to face the great crises of his career.

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**Chapter 27. Paul at Ephesus. Acts 18:23—19:22.  
About A.D. 54-56.**

Paul was not a man who could take his ease when duty called him, and we may assume that he did not make a long stay at Antioch after his return thither from his visit to Jerusalem. He longed to see his Galatian converts and to be assured of their willing response to his letter.

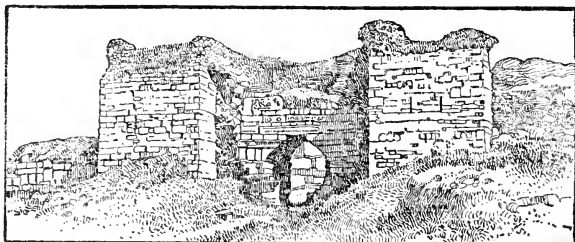
The apostle now saw his way made clear to the achievement of a purpose which had been in his mind for years. He was fixed in his intention to go to Ephesus and begin a work in that active center of trade and religion in the province of Asia. The region of whose life Ephesus was the focus was the one remaining important region in which the Gospel message was not being preached.

Paul made his way thither by way of Galatia. He was surely received by the churches and people there with overflowing penitence and good will. Nothing further do we hear in Galatia regarding the influence of the Judaizing Christians, who had nearly wrecked his work. Some time may have elapsed before he left the Galatic region and betook himself to Asia.

Meanwhile an interesting series of events was taking place at Ephesus. A Jew, named Apollos, a very learned and eloquent as well as deeply spiritual man, had come thither and taken a prompt and helpful share in the work which was going on. He believed in Jesus, but knew no more about Him than he had received from disciples of John the Baptist. Priscilla and Aquila

met him and gave him additional instruction, which he received with sincere joy and great access of power. Hearing of the growing church at Corinth, he desired to put his gifts to service there. The Christians at Ephesus encouraged him in this resolve, and gave him hearty letters of introduction which insured him immediate recognition. Apollos thus found a congenial field. Corinth was such a battle ground as he would choose. He was a trained rhetorician and philosopher, able to discuss in the fashion the Greeks loved the ideas of the faith. He was thus able to render a real service to the Corinthian church, at the very time when it was needed. He soon gained distinction as a powerful debater and helpful preacher.

When Apollos was well settled at Corinth Paul reached Ephesus and went to work. His first experi-



**Ruins at Ephesus. Sometimes Called the Gate of Persecution.**

ence was a novel one. He met a dozen men who called themselves Christians, but who had not been converted under apostolic preaching. Like Apollos they vaguely believed on Jesus as the expected Messiah. They had been baptized, like John's disciples, unto repentance and expectancy, but had no notion regarding the gift of the Spirit. Paul, thereupon, gave them instruction, so that they thankfully received Christian baptism and immediately exhibited the customary tokens of the Spirit's presence. These two instances of earnest and zealous but half-taught, crude Christians were, probably, only illustrations of a common happening.

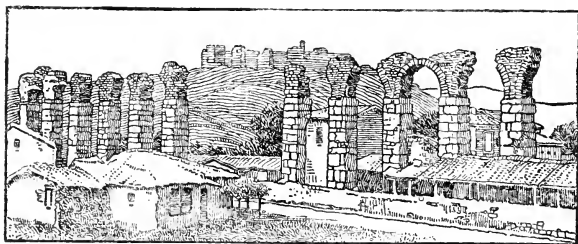
Following his usual custom Paul made free use of the synagogue, so long as he was unhampered in his work there. It was after all the ideal place for the preacher. To the synagogue resorted those who were keen to consider matters of religion among the Greeks as well as among the Jews. But Paul's bold and broad preaching produced the inevitable result. After three months the opposition of some of the Jews became so bitter and unfair that he found it expedient to change to the adjacent lecture room of a teacher named Tyrannus. Since he was working daily in self-support (20:34), his hours for public disputation Ramsay has reckoned as between eleven in the morning and four in the afternoon, these not being the customary hours of either labor or trade.

The two years thus spent were not merely years of constant activity. They were years of striking incidents. Among these the narrative of Acts has preserved the mention of two. So deep an impression did Paul make on the community that it was devoutly believed that he could exercise at will all magical powers. People even vied in touching his person with pieces of clothing which were then regarded as possessed of magical virtue. Paul himself had healed some at least in the name of the Lord Jesus. Imitating him, the seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew of high repute, undertook to perform acts of healing. Two of them experimented upon a demented man with serious personal results to themselves, but to the increased fame of Paul. Many of those who had made a living by the practice of magical arts publicly confessed their trickery and became devoted Christians. Thus the repute of the Christian body grew apace.

Such notable incidents provoked brutal opposition. There can be little doubt that these years were the years of greatest personal danger for the intrepid apostle. His Jewish opponents would stop at nothing. The Ephesian mob had no manner of scruples. When the apostle remarked that he "died daily," he hinted at the

humiliations, the threatenings, the insults, the perils of which he never had any lack. Nothing but the hope of a resurrection could nerve him for such experiences.

Yet they were years of rapidly extending influence. Paul was not alone at Ephesus. He nowhere calls the roll of his loyal followers who were with him there. Silas, Timothy, Titus, Sosthenes he mentions, but others were doubtless at his command, for the work carried on was quite extensive. As the riot which closed his career in the city imputed, the missionary work of the band had made itself felt far and wide. The churches mentioned in the first chapters of the Revelation were probably planted during this period of activity as well as others nowhere directly mentioned.



Ruins of an Aqueduct, at Ephesus.

At last Paul felt that he had reached the end of his work at Ephesus. He purposed to carry into effect the visit which he had been planning to make to Jerusalem, the home of Christianity and of the mother church. He had exhorted each of the national groups to lay by liberal contributions toward a fund which they were to give in common to the church at Jerusalem. The great-hearted apostle longed to reconcile his converts and the brethren at Jerusalem, and to bring about a willing and hearty recognition where now there existed a forced one. In order to take the last steps in the collection of the fund Paul determined to visit Macedonia and Achaia before sailing for Jerusalem. He had likewise the de-



sire to come to an understanding with the church at Corinth, with which he had been obliged to take severe measures, stretching to the utmost his apostolic authority. Having achieved this, he would turn with a sense of blessed relief to the duty of drawing together the two great wings of the Christian church.

These two years reveal Paul at his best. During this time he probably wrote three letters to the Corinthians,—our First Corinthians and two which are lost, unless perhaps the last one is included in the present Second Corinthians. He was harassed, but not cast down; opposed, but only to the forming of broader and finer purposes; supported by loyal friends without becoming vainglorious; attested by the manifestation of spiritual power, yet true to his Master. He was great in serviceableness, declaring unto men “the whole counsel of God,” holding not his life of any account.

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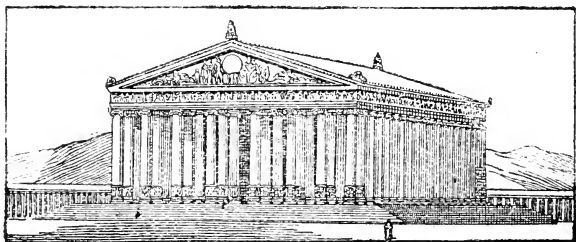
**Chapter 28. The Riot at Ephesus. Acts 19:23-41.  
About A. D. 57.**

One of the most interesting and truly instructive pictures of social life in a great Asiatic city is afforded by the narrative in the book of Acts which describes the great riot which arose in Ephesus because of the successful work of Paul in that city and its extended environs.

Ephesus was a focus of all kinds of life. The East and the West blended there as at Corinth. It was a rallying center for the commercial and educational interests and the religious ambitions of all Asia. A city proud of its culture, Ephesus nevertheless inclined to the showy and the sensual. Religion was ever in evidence, but was openly ministering to superstition and sorcery, to selfishness and sensationalism. Paul could

have had but little sympathy with the worship of Artemis, or Diana, to use the Roman name adopted in the English text. Doubtless he took a more aggressive attitude in relation to the worship of the goddess than he had taken at Athens to the general worship of deities by way of their images. At all events the worshippers of the goddess had a real grievance against him.

The great temple at Ephesus was dedicated to the goddess Diana. Worshipers at her shrine were accustomed to carry away, as tokens of their attendance and as amulets which would preserve their good fortune, little shrines, the most perfect and costly ones executed in silver, representing the great shrine of Diana



**Temple of Diana, at Ephesus, Restored.**

with the statue of the goddess within. Citizens and strangers alike, those whose worshipful motives were unmistakable and those who were merely visitors to this wonder of the world, purchased these miniature temples and often wore them as ornaments. Those who could not afford the shrines made from silver purchased those made from terra cotta or marble.

Various trades were thus affected by the decline in the demand for the shrines by pilgrims. It was sufficiently serious to awaken their genuine alarm and solicitude. Each trade had its well organized guild, that of the workers in silver being perhaps the most important. Demetrius was possibly the master of this guild for the year, thus having the power to convene it

for any purpose. To judge from his opening remark to his fellow craftsmen he and they were men of substantial wealth, the source of which Paul had seriously undermined.

The narrative of Acts taken alone would give an inadequate idea of the extent of Paul's work in the province of Asia, were it not for the report of this movement on the part of Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen. Paul's missionary efforts must have taken a far wider range than the city of Ephesus. Through his lieutenants he evangelized far and near, founding, probably, not a few churches, and developing a new group as distinct as either of the other three groups of churches organized by him. No one could anticipate the extent of his work and the remarkable results from it. There was real reason for the panic and the determined action of the guild of shrine-makers.

The superstition of all Asia seemed to be concentrated at Ephesus, yet it was the interests of this business which first caused an alarm. Demetrius cleverly aroused the fears of his fellow craftsmen by reminding them that their continuing prosperity depended upon the persistency of the reverence paid to the great goddess, the patron of their city, and that Paul had made such progress with his missionary endeavors that he was likely to achieve, not merely their ruin, but the collapse of the whole system of stately and splendid worship, and the yielding by their city of its great influence and prosperity.

The city mob in Ephesus was readily stirred against a Jewish or Christian preacher. The rage of the undisciplined, uncontrollable mob, acting on behalf of a pretended loyalty to home or sovereign, was always the most dangerous foe which Christian leaders had to face. It may or may not have been the "beasts at Ephesus" of which Paul had written a little earlier, but no more dreaded experience could well have been his.

The craftsmen, stirred to their souls by the words of Demetrius, rushed out of the guild hall into the street

exclaiming, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" The crowd took it up and re-echoed it, until, under the spell of an excitement which was irrepressible, they rushed into the great theatre capable of holding twenty-five thousand people, to hear further from their leaders, and plan concerted action. On the way they picked up two of Paul's companions, known to belong to his company.



**Diana of the Ephesians.**

From an alabaster image in the museum at Naples.

The apostle heard the uproar and with a courage that kindled in the face of danger he determined to enter the theatre and say what he could in defense of his friends and of his policy. This would simply have been signing his own death warrant in the inflamed condition of the public mind, hence the responsible officials called Asiarchs sent word to him to do nothing of the sort.

These Asiarchs were officials, partly political, partly religious. They developed out of the necessity of devising forms of worship which should have a political value. The Romans understood to the full the art of thus binding together loyalty and religious entertainment. Each province of the empire was organized on a politico-religious basis. Of the polity thus developed the Asiarchs were the recognized heads. They were leading citizens given this high position because their elevation afforded them satisfaction and honor and thus committed them to the use of their influence in maintaining loyalty and preventing disturbance.

The mob was not in the mood to listen to any one who could not command their obedience. The Jews were in fear that the mob would turn upon them and put forward a countryman, Alexander, to speak, but he was not allowed to do so. Then the secretary of the city, a very important official, realizing the growing gravity of the situation, took it upon himself to quell the

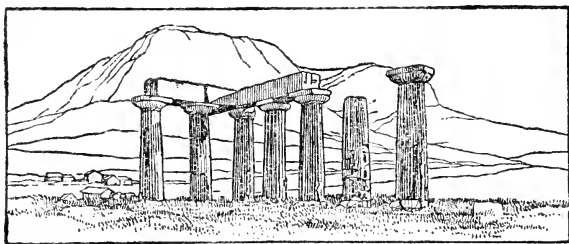
populace. Probably he was the most influential man in Ephesus. It was his business to collect and hold the public revenues and to serve as the medium of communication between the imperial government and that of the city. He was neither influenced by the shouting of the citizens, nor blind to the probable innocence of Paul, nor unaware of the serious consequences of the report of such proceedings at Rome. Declaring that Paul was guilty of no disrespect either in act or language to the goddess of the city, and warning them that the Roman authorities were wont to uphold the rights of every citizen or visitor, he bade them disperse and quelled the disturbance. But Paul could no longer continue his work of evangelization. He left with as little delay as possible for Macedonia.

Rome's impartial justice had saved Paul more than once in his career, and it saved him again. A strong and stable government is the foundation of all true religious development, compelling men to consult their reason instead of their prejudices, to follow wise leaders rather than act from impulse.

**Chapter 29. The Primitive Church at School. 1 Cor. chs. 1-11. Written from Ephesus, about A. D. 57.**

While Paul was busily engaged at Ephesus he did not forget the churches he had founded. Their interests were very dear to him, and without doubt he kept in far closer touch with their development than our existing information would indicate.

The church at Corinth was not far away and for its troubles he had full sympathy. It was growing up under conditions which menaced its fruitfulness and spiritual life. In a general way every one of the Christian churches was exposed to such conditions, but not to the degree of that at Corinth. The Corinthian church



**Old Temple in Corinth.**

*From a photograph.*

This temple was built in the seventh century before Christ, and was probably in perfect condition in the time of Paul.

members were mainly Gentiles (1 Cor. 12:2) and for the most part were recruited from the humbler classes (1 Cor. 1:26). From infancy these men and women had been accustomed to a freedom of speech and action which bordered on the immoral. Corinth was noted in that age for its general depravity. A Corinthian was a synonym for dissoluteness on the stage. Under these circumstances, we need not wonder that excesses of one kind and another had to be dealt with in the little church in that wicked city, and that the apostle centered all his energy in the struggle with them.

A variety of causes were at work in the church to

disturb its harmonious growth. On the one hand, as a cursory reading of the first few chapters reveals, there were some who were criticising Paul, comparing him to the eloquent Apollos or denying his right to have any authority over them, even questioning his apostolate (1 Cor. ch. 9). Evidently the Judaizing bacillus had made its way across the sea to Corinth, and had begun its secret work of disparagement and the breaking down of the loyalty of Paul's churches to their leader.

There was also a manifest tendency to split into warring factions, each adopting the name and striving to uphold the claims to supremacy of Paul, Apollos or Peter, while a fourth faction refused to honor any human leader and declared that they followed Christ only. Equally important to check were the excesses, born of untutored impulse and long-prevailing habits, manifested even in religious exercises and in church relations, while on doctrinal matters there was continual necessity of simple instruction. The Corinthian Christians, as Paul declared, were a set of little children as regards Christian experience. They needed leadership.

Practically no one denies the authenticity of the two epistles of Paul to the Corinthian church. There are many who think we find trustworthy evidence in our present epistles for the writing of at least four letters by Paul to the Corinthian Christians. First Corinthians 5:9 points to a note, at least, which was sent to the church before its own receipt. Our First Corinthians would then be the second writing which passed from Ephesus to Corinth.

The immediate cause of the writing of First Corinthians is plain to one who reads the letter. It was clearly in reply to one from the church (7:1) asking for the apostle's opinion regarding a number of questions which were dividing the church. It had been sent over by the hands of a deputation of three (1 Cor. 16:17) and was answered categorically by the apostle.

But he had also gotten word concerning the church

from others who had come from Corinth to Ephesus, and was deeply moved by their report of factionalism, selfishness, excesses, the denying of the resurrection, and of flagrant immorality tolerated by the church.

The apostle without delay wrote a letter which placed these problems in a way for being correctly solved. With great wisdom he did not utter a fiat and seek to compel every church member to obey. He rather aimed to reveal the broad spiritual principles under which each particular difficulty found its free solution. Paul's idea of a Christian was not one developed by obedience to rules, but rather by the application to life's conditions of great principles. He would remove the temptation to the misuse of the body by exalting it as a temple of the Holy Spirit, never to be defiled in such ways.

The letter begins with a beautiful salutation, as Christ's ambassador to those who had consecrated themselves to a holy life of service, continuing with the gracious expression of his joy in their Christian vitality and enthusiasm.

Paul then turned at once to the troubles of which he had been made aware. He first gives attention to the factionalism which was wrecking the unity of the church and sapping its strength (1:10—4:21). He met it by declaring the pre-eminence of Christ, the only Saviour of men. Paul could be a father of the little churches; Apollos and Peter could build them up; but the crucified Christ was their one and only Head and Saviour. He also declared that by following one teacher and shutting out the others they were impoverishing and defrauding themselves, listening to a restricted message.

The next case noted is one of open immorality, (ch. 5) of a type which not even the Greeks would approve. The sinner was a member of the church. Paul's opinion regarding him was explicit. The guilty one should be excommunicated, until he manifested repentance. Moreover, church members should keep out of the intimate companionship of people of loose lives.



Another matter which required advice was the growing habit of taking disputes to the courts for settlement. The Corinthian Christians were in danger of forgetting that they were brethren in Christ (6: 1-11). They quoted Paul's own glowing words of spiritual freedom in defense of license, apparently of immorality. But the apostle reminds them that Christian liberty asks two questions rather than one. It not alone considers what may be lawful but also what is best. Our bodies belong to God; let us glorify Him through them. He who longs to honor God will settle the question of fornication forever.

The apostle then replies in succession to the details of the questions of the church in the deputation's letter. The first one related to marriage (ch. 7). Paul considers this from a practical point of view. Those who were unmarried and could give themselves contentedly and wholly to active service he advised to remain single. This capacity for celibacy was a gift, but one without moral value. The married he directed to remain faithful, not making a change of heart the excuse for separation.

The next question was a delicate one. Corinthian society was partly Christian and partly pagan. Among the latter every meal was consecrated by offering some small portion in private or public. It signified that the meal was shared by the god. All public feasts were thus hallowed. A Christian often felt obliged to choose between patriotism and fidelity to his religious convictions. With regard to this there was an honest difference of opinion among Christians. Paul stood by the doctrine of liberty (ch. 8) but tempered it by love. He believed in being guided by one's own convictions, yet pleaded for Christian considerateness.

His own example (ch. 9) was in point. Having all apostolic rights, he did not enforce them, because he desired to preach the Gospel without remuneration, that he might serve all men alike, and make his own salvation sure.

Finally (10:1—11:1) he declares that the Christian life is arduous. It is a fulfilment of earnest purposes. Men cannot be Christians and pagans at the same time. It calls for clear vision and deliberate choice. He who truly seeks the glory of God is apt to do right.

The eleventh chapter discusses two more faults in the church: the indecorous behavior of the women (vss. 2-16) and the disorderliness at the celebration of the Lord's Supper (vss. 17-34). Each is settled by a principle. Let women do that which is seemly. Let brethren beware of turning the cup of remembrance into a cup of intoxication, and remember that they are brethren indeed.

Thus in this noble letter the great apostle shows the Corinthians the larger and better way. He lifts them out of petty and selfish interests into the realm of the eternal.

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### **Chapter 30. The Supreme Gift. 1 Cor. chs. 12-15.**

While the whole of the First Epistle to the Corinthians was of great value to those for whom it was written, the closing chapters have more of continuing value. In them the apostle reveals the simple grandeur of his thinking and the depth of his experience. It is Paul, the constructive Christian thinker, who could deal with the religious disorders of his day, admitting the elements of sincerity and reality, eliminating that which was useless and emphasizing that which was essential. He was at his best in a kind of crisis. The necessity of making clear the distinction between excesses and exercises, or between religious self-glorification and spiritual gifts acted as a stimulus to his mind. Without criticising the cruder manifestations of religious zeal, or denying their legitimacy, he revealed the larger value of the heavenly grace of love, and quickened an

aspiration toward its complete embodiment in each Christian experience. Thus Paul made the crisis at Corinth the occasion for the most remarkable characterization of spiritual realities to be found in Scripture.

It has often been said that the First Epistle to the Corinthians is likely to disabuse the mind of the reader of to-day of the notion that the primitive church was a continuous love feast and prayer meeting, entirely free from the troubles which harass the churches of the twentieth century. It was rather a body of meagerly educated believers who had to be trained slowly into a comprehension of the necessity or the value of many things which we take for granted. The members of these churches had passed through varied experiences. Many were slaves; many were very humble people, desperately poor and quite unrefined; their religious capacity was often limited; they varied greatly in the methods by which they gave their emotions expression.

A superficial reading of the epistle might lead one to say that the church at Corinth was in need of reconstruction. Jealousies, partizanship, the condoning of flagrant immorality, the growth of contentions at law one with another, profligacy, license, indecorous behavior, even at the celebration of the Lord's Supper, questioning of the truth of the resurrection, rivalry in regard to religious usefulness and recognition,—what a row of crudities, contentions and evils! We have to remember that they were but the manifestations of a quickened life, and of a progressing redemption from ignorance and idolatry.

Among such men and women there were certain to be misjudgments. They set a disproportionate value upon some manifestations of spiritual power. As in earlier days and in frontier communities in this country the quiet and meditative or the useful aspects of religious life were obscured. People honored unduly those who could "speak with a tongue."

What this really was is not wholly clear. According to our present narrative in Acts ch. 2, it was at Pente-

cost the power of speaking in a foreign tongue so as to be intelligible to any one who understood that language. This ability, if given, seemed to be of no permanent value. It did not enable apostles to preach the Gospel in other lands. It was at best, and whatever form it actually took, a sign of possession by the Spirit of God. So far as we may judge by the scattered references in the New Testament and by such a letter as this, the gift of tongues ordinarily was manifested in ecstatic utterance which need not have been wholly meaningless but was not likely to be coherent or logical. Often it was really unintelligible to the average listener, but could be given a meaning by one in perfect sympathy with the one who was haranguing. Occasionally, when believers who had the gift of speech gave it freedom all at once, it seemed (1 Cor. 14:23) to one unused to such outbursts like a very Bedlam.

The apostle did not undervalue the speaking with tongues but sought to give it an appropriate emphasis and setting in the three wonderful chapters of First Corinthians which follow the twelfth. He first called attention to a certain test of the reality of the spiritual experience back of the gifts. Absolute loyalty to Jesus as Lord would characterize the true Christian believer. This loyalty might manifest itself in various ways. One man has certain distinctive traits; another man may greatly differ from him; each may be wholly sincere in his religious life and truly devoted to Christ. True Christianity involves the free and joyous co-operation of all for the promotion of their common interests and for the glory of God. Each one should have his place and his responsibility. His success should rest upon his actual usefulness within his proper sphere.

Spiritual gifts are bestowed for edification of others, not for the exaltation of the individual. The ones most to be coveted are those which are most profitable. Prophesying, by which Paul meant either preaching or the giving of testimony, is far preferable to the speaking with tongues, because it does good to all. When

men get together for spiritual stimulus, each gift is needed, and should have expression, but in orderly fashion and with Christian courtesy and forbearance.

Paul thought that all gifts were worth coveting, but he longed to have his disciples get the very best. Hence he showed "a more excellent way" in the immortal chapter about love. Without it all other gifts, however brilliant, are profitless. It heals and sweetens every form of life, it develops every grace. It is always effective, always stimulating improvement, always hopeful, the mainspring of life, the test of condition, the reward of faithfulness. Life can bring us to no better achievement than an abiding spirit of love. It is the best of gifts.

One other great theme the apostle considered before bringing his letter to a close. It seemed to him a matter of prime importance, which he must not overlook. It concerned the resurrection of Christ. There were those in the church at Corinth who denied the resurrection. To them the apostle declared first that a belief in the resurrection was fundamental, and second that the resurrection as a fact was adequately attested (1 Cor. 15:1-19). Those who denied it declared thereby that the apostles were false witnesses, that Christ Himself had not risen, that our hope in Him must be confined to this life, and that it was supremely foolish to live a life of privation and toil in order that men should be transformed in their lives.

Paul touches here on a supreme value of the truth of the resurrection. Why should men suffer now, unless supported by the assurance of a future inheritance unfading and uncorruptible? A few men and women will spend their lives in human service irrespective of any other gain than that of doing good to those in need. But the majority of men would live an earthly life, reckless and sensual, if they had no conception of immortality, no thought of a life beyond.

But the question raises itself, what will the resurrection life be like? Paul did not answer this except in a

negative way, and by analogy. A seed by death attains its true development into a very different form. So through death may be set free a far better body than our souls have at present. What that body will be who can say? God's resources are infinite. It will know no decay, no weakness, it will be spiritual! This new life will thus be the fruition of our old, natural life. Thus death may be faced, not merely with confidence and courage, but with a sense of triumph. We are entering upon an experience of endless and boundless satisfaction.

How could the sanity and cheer of normal Christianity be more clearly manifested than in the deliberate judgment of these four chapters? It is a service. It calls for discriminating and unselfish co-operative effort, which gives every one his place, which affords room for the exercise of every gift, which supremely honors usefulness and which deliberately continues to the end in the clear consciousness of a process of character building for eternity.

**Chapter 31. The Great Collection. 1 Cor. 16: 1-4; 2 Cor. chs. 8, 9. About A. D. 57.**

One theme which never left the mind of the great apostle during the controversies or triumphs of these days was the very practical question of taking a generous collection in the churches, which he had been instrumental in founding, for the benefit of the poor of the mother church at Jerusalem. To accomplish this successfully was very near to Paul's heart during the whole of the third missionary tour, ever since leaving Antioch for Galatia. In every letter written by him during this period the subject is mentioned and one or another group of disciples stirred to a generous emulation. The Galatians had already responded, the Macedonians likewise. The Corinthian church had yet to complete its quota.

It was not uncharacteristic of the apostle to connect the matter with the glorious argument just brought to a close. His wonderful study of the future life concluding with the glorious fact of the Christian's expected transformation and victory over death, a thought which should stir him to worthily accomplish his life's work, carried his readers far above the atmosphere of partizanship or discussion, of sensuality or social rivalry, of selfishness and pettiness to seat themselves in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. He urged them while still influenced by the spell of his appeal to have in mind the "collection for the saints" at Jerusalem.

The apostle must have gone about this enterprise with great hopefulness but without assurance as to the result. No more unreasonable, dogged and obstinate people ever lived than the Jews. They were always the more confirmed in their likes and hatreds, because they thought that they were honoring God thereby. The average Jew at Jerusalem held a special aversion for Paul, because he was regarded as an apostate, one who was entrusted with the confidential missions of Judaism and distinguished with its honors, only to suddenly abandon his

own people for the despised Christians. Many Christian Jews hated him just as actively and bitterly because they believed him to be undermining the confidence of Christians in the things ordained of God and substituting for Judaistic Christianity something entirely different and vastly inferior.

Even the more liberally inclined realized that Paul was not in their class, that he stood for a type of thinking to which they were unable to conform, yet because of the manifest presence of the Spirit in the hearts of his Gentile converts they were not unwilling to recognize them as fellow Christians.

Paul's day-dream was that he might turn this latter class into hearty fraternization with his disciples and might at least induce those who hated him to assume an attitude of passive approval. These enemies, however, he could not fathom. They might urge that the contribution be refused; they might consider it a sort of bribe in return for which Paul's opposition to the law was to be condoned and the "equal standing of his upstart churches acknowledged." Romans 15:31 indicates the uncertainty of his mind regarding this. Possibly the Jerusalemites would fail to see in the gift any brotherly love whatever.

Yet he would, as always, do his full duty, and let God take care of the rest. It was while he was making this gift and taking the utmost pains to conciliate this fierce Jewish temper at any cost to himself that he lost his liberty. Doubtless he often wondered when at Cæsarea in prison why God should have cut him off thus abruptly from his active career of service and while performing the most gracious and forgiving of deeds. But we who look back over his life and read the rich treasure of Christian thought packed into the three letters which Paul wrote at Rome after several years of enforced reflection can see readily the reason in the divine mind. Paul's immediate purpose may never have been gained; curiously enough, the writer of Acts leaves us in complete suspense as regards that matter



as well as others of much interest; but the influence of the scheme and its outworking on his own character and life was not slight.

The collection had evidently been completed when the letter to the Romans was written (Rom. 15:25-32). Paul took great satisfaction in the fact. Every one of his provincial churches had responded to his appeal.

We cannot wonder that the Christians at Jerusalem could be regarded as in need. 1 Thes. 2:14 rather implies a recent Judean persecution. Jerusalem gave little opportunity for the earning of a living except by



Iconium



Philippi.



Thessalonica.



Berea.



Corinth.



Ephesus.

**Coins from the Cities in which Paul Gathered Money for the Great Collection.**

Several of these are from specimens in the British Museum.

ministering to the needs of those who were there on pilgrimage or by purveying for Jerusalemites. In either case an avowed Christian was likely to be at a disadvantage. Few of the community were rich; many of these had been driven away by persecution at one time or another. Doubtless Paul had good reason to think that the gifts were really needed. Whether they would be accepted was another question.

Paul urged the Corinthians more than once to activity in raising this gift. Many of the members were slaves without any stated income. Paul suggested that each one at his own home should lay aside each Lord's day, when the action could be deliberate, the sum which he could spare. He did not himself wish to raise the money by appeals in person, but to have it a "grace" on the part of those who should give, a gift conscientiously made, a true act of worship to God.

Paul's discussion of giving in 2 Cor. chs. 8, 9 was a marvelous handling of a delicate theme. How deftly he praised the Macedonians for their generosity, declaring it to be a fit expression of their joy in Christ! How beautifully he instanced the sacrificial life of Jesus as motive for Christian generosity even to the point of self-sacrifice; how wisely he declared the freedom, the readiness and the fraternity which must work true liberality. He was true to his habit of giving great reasons for ordinary acts. To him this Christian liberality ranked as an act of faith and of brotherhood.

The privilege of giving is an idea reserved for Christian thought. Men have always been liberal, but for selfish reasons. If it is to be a "grace," there must be no other end in view than the promotion of the kingdom and the blessing of men. Many have then realized the truth of the word of our Lord which the apostle quoted that to give is far more blessed than to receive.

**Chapter 32. Paul's Tender Appeal to the Church at Corinth. 2 Cor. 4 : 16 — 6 : 10. Written during the second tour in Greece, about A. D. 57.**

No epistle written by Paul is simpler of construction and easier to comprehend than Second Corinthians, yet none raises more questions of an interesting if not absolutely vital character. One who reads it carefully notes with some surprise the marked changes of theme which indicate its three great sections. Each of these sections is complete in itself, and might be taken quite by itself as an independent production. The first section consists of chapters one to seven inclusive. It takes for granted a real repentance on the part of the church, explains Paul's failure to visit them at the appointed time, expresses gratification over the outcome and declares a continuing and deepening affection which gives the apostle new courage in his work.

There were those in the Corinthian church who had been bitter against him, not hesitating to decry his right to reprove its members, on the ground that he was no real apostle, but only one permitted by the apostles to engage in mission work. While refuting this charge Paul makes a noble declaration concerning the glorious work of the minister of Christ Jesus.

The second section includes chapters eight and nine. It refers wholly to the generous gift which Paul desired his churches to make to their poorer brethren at Jerusalem.

The third section consists of chapters ten to thirteen. It differs widely in tone and in intensity from the section preceding. Some students have realized this difference so keenly as to pronounce it impossible that Paul could have written these chapters as a part of a letter to which chapters one to seven belonged. These later chapters take up distinctly the charges made against the apostle and with indignation and scorn elaborate a defense. While we sympathize with the great leader, wounded to the quick by the sneers of those who once

had been proud to receive his notice, we cannot but be glad that he was given occasion to make so magnificent a self-defense. Paul's words furnish a side-light upon his career of the greatest value to his biographer.

These last four chapters correspond in subject matter to the letter to which Paul refers in the eighth verse of chapter seven, a "stern and highly painful letter." One of such a character must have been written by the apostle between First and Second Corinthians. The references in the early chapters of Second Corinthians cannot fairly refer to the first epistle. This last letter may be represented by 2 Cor. chs. 10-13, or the sudden change in attitude in the epistle between chapter seven and chapter ten must be explained by a resumption of his unfinished task by the apostle when in a very different and far more militant mood than that which filled his soul when dictating the earlier chapters. The question is in no way important. Paul beyond question wrote at least four letters to the Corinthian church. That portions of two of these letters became united as one is not an impossible supposition.

The great theme of the first seven chapters, called out by the glad news brought by Titus to Macedonia, is apostleship. Paul declares that there is no need that he should commend himself, since his Corinthian Christians themselves were his living letters of commendation. They by their lives were continuous testimonials to his apostolic power, for they had been its result. God had given him the needful wisdom and strength and made him adequate to his ministry.

Thus the apostle comes to a setting forth of his own conception of "the ministry of Christ," its character, motive, and persisting support (3:5—6:10), which has given inspiration and confidence to generations without number of those who have followed in his steps.

Paul's idea of the Gospel which he was preaching is suggested by the descriptive terms he uses. He glories in being the minister of a "new covenant" (3:6), not of the letter but of the spirit, aiming not at mechanical

fidelity to God but to impart real loyalty. This new ministry far surpasses the old because instead of declaring penalties it aims to upbuild in righteousness (3:9) and to bestow forgiveness and freedom from sin. The law was glorious, but its glory is not to be compared with the surpassing splendor of the Gospel. Moreover, the herald of the Gospel may speak without reserve or concealment. His message makes for freedom. He seeks for nothing but the truth as it is gloriously revealed through Christ. Contemplating that ideal he is gradually transformed into its likeness.

One with such a theme has no reason for cunning or deceit or lack of courage. It is "veiled" (4:3) only to those who have become self-blinded through deliberate sin. The heavenly vision of the glorious face of Jesus is like the gift of light on the creative morning (4:6).

My ministry, continues Paul, is one of weakness and tribulation, but these things are cheerfully endured because of the ends in view (4:1-15). He who has a vision of God and of the abiding glory of the life to come looks upon sufferings or disappointment as but trifles (4:16-18). Moreover, our certainty through God's assurance that bodily death is but an immediate entrance into the presence of Christ makes it our one ambition to do that which is well-pleasing to Him (5:1-10).

"Whatever my motives may seem to be, I am aiming to win men to holy living. The sense of Christ's great love for men has been the compelling motive of my service, ever since I saw that His saving death meant that they whose lives are transformed through Him should henceforth live unselfishly and for His sake. One who knows Christ in spiritual fellowship observes the world from a new and higher point of view. To bring this about is my constant aim" (5:11-17).

This ministry is, therefore, one of reconciliation and fellowship with God. Do not cripple or thwart it by unchristian lives. "That it has been sincere and zeal-

ous I have given abundant proof through sufferings and toils, through the purity, gentleness and godliness of my life, through the success of my service with men. Whatever my experiences, they have only served to quicken and define my ministry unto all."

These glorious yet touching words of the apostle have given inspiration to many a one who has sought to become one that ministers to his fellow men. They give expression to the joy and confidence which belongs with the higher life of unselfish faith. Their message is for every Christian man and woman who is struggling to serve.

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### **Chapter 33. Paul's Defense of his Apostolic Authority. 2 Cor. 11 : 21 — 12 : 13.**

The apostle Paul was one of those who achieve the aims which they set before themselves but hesitate to speak of what they have done. No theme was of less interest to him than the question of his own merits. But the time may come for any great leader, when he must make clear his position and his right to lead or else yield much, if not all, that he has gained to those whose enmity and criticism is due to their jealousy.

Paul did not expect to have all men adopt his point of view. He met honest opposition without complaint. He endured like a soldier the hardships entailed by his spiritual campaigns, serene in the belief that his would be the ultimate victory. He was sensible enough to presume that one who represented ideals such as his would meet with every species of persecution. But he was sensitive over accusations that raised any barrier between him and his converts, putting him before them in a false light.

His enemies in the Corinthian church had been particularly bitter and contemptible in their methods. The spirit of factionalism had led them into habits of disparagement, the full effect of which Paul encountered. The calumnies which he had silenced in the Galatian churches were given renewed expression at Corinth with additions. Here, as there, his enemies declared that he was only a second-hand apostle, deriving his authority and even his message from the "pre-eminent" (2 Cor. 11:5; 12:11) apostles. They thus excused themselves for opposing his will. They went on to declare that, because of his own conscious inferiority, he feared to come to Corinth to confront his opponents, as a true apostolic leader would do, and that, for the same reason, he did not venture to claim the support which was always accorded an apostle. Thus Paul's own tenderness for the converts who were dear to him and his generosity toward the church gave occasion for charges that could not but rankle in the mind of one accused.

They also seem to have spoken slightly of his personality and of his courage, saying that Paul was a terrible fellow a long way off from the scene of action, putting all manner of brave words into a letter (2 Cor. 10:10), but a humble and apologetic figure in the presence of those who knew him well. His retort (10:13-15) is a masterpiece of mingled irony and plain speaking. He was at all events a match for the Corinthian church.

Much of this kind of talk the great apostle would have turned aside with a keen, well-chosen thrust, serving to put the argument of his opponents into a ridiculous light—a species of verbal warfare at which he was apt—but when they went so far as to decry his spirituality, declaring that he "walked in the flesh," pursuing his own worldly and selfish ends, he felt that a crisis had been reached and that he must declare himself.

These chapters contain, not a defense of himself alone

but an appeal to the loyalty of his converts. Paul was sure that when they gave themselves a chance to reflect, the truth would be clear to them. He wrote with no vindictiveness, but "in the meekness and gentleness of Christ." He was willing to plead with them to so order their conduct that he would be spared the necessity of demonstrating in person the falsity of the slanderous charges against him.

But the crisis indicated by these chapters was an acute one. Severe indeed had been the outbreak of hatred against Paul which impeached his honesty of purpose, stopped at no personal slander, and sought to make him a reprobate before his own disciples. It centered evidently in a little coterie of men, who had possibly come in from the outside, representing the Judaizing faction in the church at large, had intrigued for leadership and were seeking to undermine the loyalty of the church at Corinth toward Paul. His stirring appeal brought the church to its senses again, and put an end to the influence of the disturbers. Whether these chapters are to be counted as the third epistle to the Corinthians and regarded as the letter referred to in the first section (2 Cor. 2:4; 7:8), the epistle of commendation (2 Cor. 3:1), or are to be considered as a part of the fourth letter to the church, the third having been entirely lost, is a question sufficiently argued in the last chapter.

Out of a full heart bursts the apostle's first long sentence (2 Cor. 10:1, 2). His indignation, its restraint, his resentment at the imputation of cowardice and his resolve to return, if need be, to administer punishment are given simultaneous expression. They charged him with "walking after the flesh," that is, with working for his personal interests. He replies that of course he is but human and yet that in his Christian warfare he uses divinely powerful weapons. Their outlook had become pitifully narrow (10:7). They were forgetting that when it came to evangelistic comparisons it was not Paul who would be shamed (10:8).



Without presuming, however, to claim a place by the side of his detractors (10:12), he would remind the Corinthians that he at least measured up to them, for they were his spiritual children.

His motive in rehearsing his services to the church was impersonal. He feared that the church would accept another "gospel" and cease to be unwaveringly loyal to Christ. Except, perhaps, in skill of speech, he yielded precedence to no one. He differed from other teachers only in that he supported himself. He did this that he might imitate the self-sacrifice of Christ. In contrast to the violent behavior of his critics toward the church (2 Cor. 11:19-21) his demeanor may have seemed weak. But in whatever they were glorying, he surpassed them, be it in lineage, knowledge, experience, sufferings, or sympathy for all in need (11:22-28). Nay, he had, many years before, been through a sacred, indescribably blessed experience in heavenly places, a secret of his inspiration for service, a temptation to spiritual pride, the cause of his sharpest trial, some humiliating and recurrent malady, the nature of which we can only conjecture. But along with the painful reminder came the cheering assurance of God's abiding grace and help (2 Cor. 12:2-10).

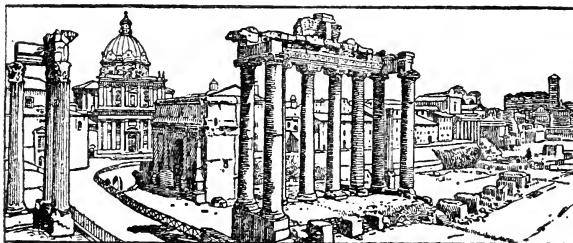
Once more Paul appeals to their good sense. Wherein had his ministry failed? His one objective was their souls' good. "Not yours, but you" (12:14). He also declares explicitly that if he finds the church on his arrival upholding sins of self-will and self-indulgence, he will use his disciplinary authority without reserve (12:19-13:10).

This "apology" is a powerful argument for Paul's nobility of character. He exalts Christ, not himself; he glories in serviceableness not in supremacy; he reproves, yet with the gentleness of a true Christian pastor; he rejoices that God's grace keeps pace with every affliction. It went to the heart of his converts; they remained thereafter wholly loyal.

**Chapter 34. Paul's Letter to the Church at Rome. Rom. 1:1-17; 15:14-33. Written from Corinth about A. D. 58.**

Paul did not long delay in following his last letter to the Corinthian church from Macedonia to Corinth. There he remained three months (Acts 20:3). During these months, and probably during the last one, he wrote the wonderful epistle to the church at Rome which an early writer regarded as presenting "the whole tenor of the Scriptures."

Ever since he was at Ephesus, Paul had been looking forward to a visit to Rome (Acts 19:21). He was



**View in the Roman Forum**

The seven columns in the foreground are all that remains of the splendid temple of Saturn, which was the Roman treasury in the time of Paul.

beginning to feel that his pioneering work in the East was well along, if not completed. From Jerusalem and round about even unto Illyricum he had "fully preached the gospel of Christ" (Rom. 15:19). No longer had he any available new territory (Rom. 15:23) to explore and organize—territory, that is to say, in which he was obviously the proper type of missionary.

He had many reasons for desiring to visit Rome. A citizen of the world in the finest sense of that term, he regarded the imperial capital as the great center of all kinds of influence. A missionary who had labored with such success at Antioch, Corinth and Ephesus would be strongly attracted to the queen city of all.

We do not know how strongly he was drawn to the church itself, for we know practically nothing about its history. The traditions concerning it are certainly of little value, while conjectures are varying. It may have originated through those who, when "scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). Christians drifted to Rome and gradually got together, forming a church. From the allusions in the epistle it may be conjectured that the bulk of the members were Gentiles, so that without hesitation the apostle might send to them a letter of this kind.

The epistle is a many-sided one, hardly to be summed up in one word. It is more of a deliberate unity than any letter previously written. It is the systematic exposition of the Gospel which he preached, not a letter, really, so much as a treatise. Some have attributed this peculiarity of Romans to the importance and situation of the church at Rome, it being essential that it should receive a correct impression of all that Paul stood for in view of his approaching visit and anxiety to be properly understood and received. Others, having in mind the perilous journey which he was about to undertake, explain its completeness of argument as a sort of written formulation of his views that they might be preserved. Still other interpreters explain the character of Romans as an attempt on the part of the apostle, in view of rumors that had come to him (Rom. 16: 17-20), to forestall the divisive and disturbing influence of some Judaizers who were making themselves felt in the church.

Whatever the reason that impelled Paul, we may be profoundly grateful that he felt himself at this period of his career compelled to state in exact and final fashion his reasons for preaching salvation through Christ alone. For years he had been justifying this Gospel to congregations without number. Though he knew it not, his controversial career was nearing an end. The letter to the Roman Christians put into permanent form the results of these years of argument. It gave an answer

to the Jew who rested upon the divine origin of the law, and encouraged the Gentile who felt in his heart that forgiveness had been given him through the grace of the Lord Jesus. It expressed the present and prevailing duty of the Christian believer. It is and yet is not the greatest of the letters of Paul. The judgment of the student regarding it will be determined by his bent of mind. The admirer of a well-sustained argument regarding important problems in religion will declare the letter to the Romans a masterpiece. Nor is it devoid of deep feeling and grand enthusiasm. The Paul who penned it was not a recluse bending over his manuscript, but a mighty pioneer who planned to win the world for Christ. His majestic religious purpose is as impressive as his argument.

As usual the letter opens with an elaborate salutation and thanksgiving. In the former (1:1-7) Paul declares his apostolic call to preach the Gospel; in the latter (1:8-15) he recognizes their faithfulness and expresses his desire to work among them with a Gospel message which they will welcome, viz., the opportunity of salvation through faith for every man (1:16, 17) whether Jew or Greek.

The apostle then exhibits sin as a universal fact to be taken for granted, not alone among the unevangelized heathen (1:18-32) but among the instructed Jews (ch. 2). The latter have an advantage (3:1, 2) but their unbelief is unjustifiable (3:3-8). All men are guilty in God's sight (3:9-18), as the Scriptures imply (3:19, 20). No one can win salvation for himself by his works.

From 3:21 to 8:39 is the positive argument to prove that salvation is a free gift of God bestowed through faith in Christ alone. The faith method of salvation was revealed by the Old Testament and accomplished through Christ (3:21-31). Abraham was saved by faith, not by works; and believers, his spiritual children, inherit through faith not through the law (ch. 4). The assurance of salvation gives peace and hope and joy to

every one. It will be made complete since God's grace outmatches the power of sin (ch. 5). The Christian is not thereby enabled to disregard the moral law, but as he comes into fellowship with Christ he enters upon a life of holiness (6:1-14). His freedom from the law is not a freedom to do wrong (6:15—7:6). The law was merely a useful instrumentality, not an end in itself. It reveals the character of sin but cannot deliver men from sin (7:7-25). The Christian, living the life of the Spirit, is assured peace and immortality. All the resources of God's grace are his (ch. 8).

Was God's providential relationship to Israel a failure? Only as Israel has failed to accept the Messiah. But the true Israel is the result of a historic selective process, and God in rejecting the nation is not refusing to honor His pledge (9:1-29). The Jewish race sought salvation through works and rejected the easy conditions of faith (9:30—10:21). Their attitude hastened the salvation of the Gentile world, that Gentile and Jew alike might share God's final blessing (ch. 11).

In view of the divine goodness may every one reconsecrate himself (ch. 12). Let him do his public duties honorably (ch. 13). Let him deal with fellow Christians in all forbearance (14:1—15:13). These are the ideals I am longing to set before you in person (15:14-33).

A truly noble outline of a world-wide Gospel of redemption by faith and re-creation by the Spirit. "Verily no man can read it too oft or study it too well" (Tyndale).

**Chapter 35. The Assurance of the Christian Believer.  
Rom. ch. 8.**

The great epistle to the Romans cannot be dismissed in one quick analysis. Its depth of thought and marvelous insight into experience is realized only by those who take the argument more in detail. We may well afford, therefore, to dwell in particular upon the three great chapters, six to eight, which show what Paul really meant by justification by faith. Then, as now, the zeal of men for phrases and arguments not infrequently led to the obscuring of actual facts. Paul's arguments might well be misunderstood by many who heard them for the first time, and regarded as encouraging moral wrong.

After setting forth the universal sinfulness of men,—Gentile and Jew alike,—and their need of divine righteousness, the apostle had shown that this righteousness was put within their reach through the redemption which is in Christ, that it is appropriated through faith in Him, thus giving no one an opportunity to boast over his salvation, and making it free to all on identical terms. He further showed, citing the example of Abraham and the testimony of David, that this conception of salvation not only does not upset but rather establishes the religious relationship under which Abraham lived; it illustrates, extends and confirms it. Happy, then, are they who are conscious of being made right with God through faith. The love of God becomes very real and present to them and their future blessedness is assured.

Passing over the obscure digression (5:12-21) which draws a comparison between the universal reign of sin since Adam and the universal forgiveness through Christ, we note that the apostle in the next three chapters sought to address the moral consciousness of humanity and to show that justification through faith in Christ was in no sense whatever a warrant for license. Dr. Denney puts the argument concisely in these words:

"Chapter six shows that the Christian, in baptism, dies to sin; chapter seven, that by death he is freed from the law, which, in point of fact, owing to the corruption of his nature perpetually stimulates sin; chapter eight, that the Spirit imparted to believers breaks the power of the flesh, and enables them to live to God." It will be worth our while to go over the argument more in detail.

Two clever rather than substantial objections to Paul's theory of salvation would occur to one brought up under a theory which laid full stress upon man's responsibility for his acts and the bearing of those on his relationship with God. If God's grace, one might say, keeps pace with human sinfulness, why not sin the more, so as to evoke the more grace? Such a conception ignores the real character of the Christian life. The Christian enters into a fellowship for life with Christ which means a complete breaking off of relations with the old life of sin. He dies to sin and is resurrected to holiness and a pure, moral life. He lives henceforth, like Christ, a Godly life.

Again, such an one might say, if we are not under law but under grace, are we not free to sin? Not so, because we are servants of righteousness and bound to conform to its ideals. Instead of using our bodily powers for selfish and wicked ends we should make them promote holiness of life, a life which becomes eternal.

Getting free from the bondage of the Old Testament law is accomplished by death. Just as a wife is made free by the death of her husband to enter into new relations with another, the marriage bond being dissolved by death, so the Christian by his moral death to sin is freed from his bondage to sin and made free to serve his new Master, Christ, with joy and serenity (7:1-6).

Let us not infer, however, that the law is evil. Not at all, but it has been the occasion of awakening the consciousness of sin (7:7-13). Life under the law comes to this in experience that when one wishes to do good, evil is ever present with him, and the law does

not enable him to conquer sinful impulses. In fact, evil propensities gain the victory often over deep and true moral desires, making one the hopeless slave of sin. There is no release except through Christ (7:14-25).

Now the contrast between the old life under the law and the blessed life which the Christian may lead is sweepingly complete. The life of the Spirit is not a life of continual struggle against a dominating law. In Christ, God sent a new saving power into the world and brought to an end the claims and the authority of sin for those who are united to Christ (8:1-4). The one who has been justified by God's grace in Christ is one who has surely begun to live a good life in the Spirit (8:5-11).

This life of the Spirit creates in us a new nature. By a sort of adoption we become a part of the true family of God, a relationship that quickly becomes more and more real. As God's children we naturally inherit the great blessings of His kingdom, and therefore share in the sufferings which a faithful adherence entails (8:12-17).

Of the blessedness to which the Christian may look forward there is on every side an eager expectation. In some sense inanimate creation seems to be awaiting it; its hope and promise are involved in the very constitution of things. When the curse is wholly lifted from man, it will be lifted from nature also, and man will find himself in a new world matching his new condition (8:18-22).

The Christian, too, is looking always ahead. What he has already experienced is but the foretaste of heaven itself. Only by death, when he has exchanged his mortal body for an immortal one, can he possess the full privileges and joys of sonship (8:23-25).

Moreover, the Holy Spirit intercedes for the Christian in his deep need, understanding and expressing that need in ways which only God can fully understand. This is the Spirit's constant aim. What a prospect this extends to the sincere believer! He is sure of the fore-



seeing, unchangeable love of God, which follows him continuously (8:26-30).

This leads to a glorious conclusion. In the light of all this certain blessedness, how insignificant become the sufferings we encounter! Redemption implies divine care for the redeemed. When God gives His Son, He gives the universe too. In spite of all impediments, God's chosen ones will be carried through. No one can condemn them, since Christ died, rose, and intercedes for them. No hardship or suffering, not even death, nothing that God has made can do more than give us deeper and more thrilling experiences of the love of Christ (8:31-39).

One great thought of these three wonderful chapters is that justification and moral righteousness are co-existent and inseparable. The new life in the Spirit begins the moment a real forgiveness from sin is attained. The evidence of the deliverance is the actively righteous life.

Another thought, equally great, is that of the place in the Christian's life of the victorious spirit of love. Love is stronger than law. The one who, though conscious of weakness, deliberately chooses to follow the pathway of faith and love and holiness, has assurance of success.

**Chapter 36. The Last Journey to Jerusalem. Acts 20:3—21:16, About A. D. 58.**

The subject of the journeyings of the apostle Paul to the mother city, Jerusalem, their number, dates and purpose is one which may never be decided to the entire satisfaction and acceptance of New Testament scholars. Of this particular journey and its right to be called the last one which the apostle made to Jerusalem there is no question whatever.

It was a journey for which he had long been preparing, and to which he had alluded, again and again, in the letters of these active years. By it he hoped to carry out a scheme which had long been in his mind for uniting fraternally his churches with those in Palestine. He desired, if possible, to be the means of healing the breach to which his own work and words had given the chief occasion. He hoped to make such proof of the genuineness of the Christian virtues in the hearts of his converts that even the bigoted and determined brethren at Jerusalem would be unable to reject it or to continue their attitude of suspicion.

Paul had arranged to sail from Corinth for Jerusalem at the opening of navigation, hoping probably to reach Jerusalem by Passover, but the discovery that a Jewish plot had been laid against him, a plot, perhaps, to be executed on the ship which would have been crowded with pilgrims, Jews of Corinth and Asia, his sworn foes, made him change his plans so as to reach Jerusalem by a different route and at a later date.

Quite a number of men were preparing to accompany him. These were the chosen representatives of the various groups of churches, sent by them at Paul's request to make the journey with him and to witness the outcome, so that there should be no chance for such malicious charges as, to his cost, he had found even his own converts capable of. A question of the correct reading of Acts 20:4, 5 makes the actual course of their getting together a little obscure, but it is clear that they

all met at Troas, whither Paul came after a hasty visit to the churches in Macedonia.

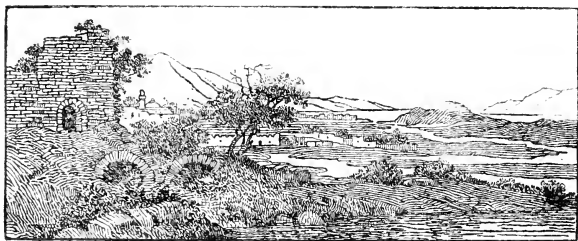
The narrative of the voyage to Jerusalem is vivid and valuable. It is again in the words of an eye witness, for the interesting first personal pronoun begins once more with verse five. We do not read much relating to the companions, since the author of Acts was interested mainly in Paul, the leading personality in all these events. Altogether they must have made quite a company, for the church at Corinth and perhaps those of Cilicia and the mother church at Antioch were sharers in the enterprise.

The stay at Troas continued for a week, and concluded on Sunday evening. It is most interesting to note this earliest reference to the "first day" as being marked out by the Christian church as the special day for public worship and in particular for the regular celebration of the communion in the "breaking of the bread." It was possible, as Ramsay long since pointed out, for the company to remain with the church at Troas even until far into the night, since the proper wind from the north, with the advent of which their ship would set sail, could not be expected before daybreak. The rest of the party joined the vessel at its anchorage, but Paul lingered, intending to go overland to Assos, below the cape around which the vessel had to sail.

A curious incident happened at Troas during the prolonged service of the evening. A young man, belonging, doubtless, to one of the Christian families of Troas, and probably coming to the service after a day of toil, was so overcome by drowsiness that he fell out of a window and was taken up for dead. The apostle assured the friends that he would live, and continued the discourse. Whether the narrative intends that it should be understood that Paul wrought a miracle of healing is not wholly clear, but at all events the young man recovered, and that which might have cast a blight over the farewell of Paul to his followers became rather an occasion of rejoicing.

The story of the voyage proceeds clearly enough as far as Miletus. Ramsay explains the straight course to Miletus and the delay there instead of at Ephesus by supposing that the ship in which the company took passage from Troas was due to make one stop only between Troas and Patmos, and that at Miletus. The delay at Miletus would give just time enough for communication with Ephesus, whereas a stop at Ephesus might cause a considerable delay, not to mention possible dangers or complications.

He lost no time in despatching a messenger from Miletus to summon the leaders of the church at Ephesus to join him. They responded at once, so that he had



RUINS AT MILETUS.

The arches are on the site of the ancient city. The harbor in which Paul's ship lay was in the central part of the picture. It is now mostly filled up with mud.

one last opportunity for an interview, which none among them would ever forget.

In the report of this conference, condensed as usual into a discourse which at best but broadly represented the earnest words of that night together, Paul gave frank expression to the forebodings which pressed upon his soul. He was sure that it was the Lord's will that he should go to Jerusalem, but he also realized that some fresh test of his courage and faith would present itself. He was, like a true pastor, more concerned for them, left without his helpful guidance, than for himself. Reminding them of the zealous and unselfish character

of his ministry when among them, and declaring that they might never see him again, he affectionately and solemnly appealed to them to be faithful, generous and sincere shepherds of the flock of God, praying that God would uphold them in their service. It was such an address as we might expect from the great apostle, tender, intense and stirring. It broke their hearts to think that such a leader was going to meet a fate unknown.

Paul did not lack other tests of his fixedness of purpose and courage. At Cæsarea he received unmistakable confirmation of his own forecasts. The whole Christian community united in pleading with him to keep away from Jerusalem, and his comrades added their petitions. All manner of specious reasons were adduced for permitting his companions to execute the mission and saving himself for the needed work of evangelization. No doubt they urged him to sail for Rome, promising to quickly follow him thither with a message of success. But Paul was not to be deterred from following his conviction that he himself was summoned to Jerusalem. So at last they yielded and all set out for the city of Jerusalem.

This voyage narrative throws a vivid light upon the true grandeur of Paul. He was made in heroic mould. The prospect of sufferings never affected his course in the least. He was not his own man, but Christ's man. He found his highest joy in executing the Master's will, whatever that might imply. He was never foolhardy, but he would not allow danger to interfere with duty. All lives may be made heroic on this simple principle.

It meant much to him of comfort that he could truly say on looking back that no one could accuse him of a selfish or slack or superficial ministry. Always he had aimed to do his best for others, entering into their experiences and leading them to God. There is no joy in life quite equal to that of the consciousness of first-rate service to one's fellow men. It is reachable by all, even by the humblest and least experienced.

Jesus Himself said it was but the giving of a cup of cool water, the doing for the love of it of simple service in the Master's name.

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**Chapter 37. Paul's Disappointing Visit to Jerusalem.  
Acts 21 : 17—22 : 22. About A.D. 58.**

At last the apostle and his company had reached the goal of his long deferred hopes. He was again at the city where so many experiences, fruitful for good and for evil, had come to him. Without knowing it himself, he was at another great turning-point in his career of much significance in history.

The leisureliness of the last stage of his trip may well indicate that he and his company found themselves, after all, in good season for the great feast of Pentecost. Jewish pilgrims from all parts of the world were in Jerusalem. Not a few of these were Paul's bitter enemies; all were excited over exaggerated and twisted reports of his teachings. From the standpoint of personal safety Paul might as well have entered a den of hungry lions as the beautiful city crowded with those who had fresh reasons each year to regard him as the greatest obstacle to their dreams of a universal Judaism.

His first experience, however, was one of friendship and fraternity. The Christian leaders received him as one of themselves. Accordingly, on the day following his arrival, Paul and his whole party were received by James and the elders. Since there is no mention of the apostles, it may be assumed that they were not present. The acknowledged leader of the Christian church at Jerusalem was James, the Lord's brother, a very strict upholder of the law. Before him and the other men of influence Paul gave a detailed account of his ministry in Syria, Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, and Greece. His hearers were stirred to enthusiasm, and determined, then and there, to bring about an understanding con-

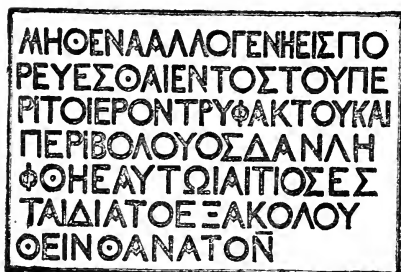
cerning him among the great body of Jewish Christians which would enable them to hear this inspiring account of the progress of the Gospel among those who had been unbelievers.

The cause for the persistent hatred toward Paul of all partisan Jews was due to the report that he was teaching, not Gentiles alone but the Jews whom he found in other countries, that they should no longer regard the Mosaic law as binding. This idea was not without justification on their part, yet it was not fair to Paul. He taught freely that the keeping of the law was not essential to salvation, but he did not advise those who had been born Jews to neglect its requirements. However, an outcry against him even among the Christians was to be anticipated, and this the leaders wished to avoid. So James and the others proposed that he make a demonstration of his readiness to act under the law. Paul was yielding no principle here. He had made a vow only a short while before. The conclusion of that vow would formally be in some ceremonial of Judaism, best of all at the temple at Jerusalem. He was thus acting no part in consenting to the scheme proposed by the friends. He was making a concession, but one which he could rightly regard as harmless. He had but to join a party of Nazirites and pay their expenses in order to manifest his friendliness for Judaism and to prove his patriotism. It was a prudent course, but not an unprincipled one. Paul ran some risk of misrepresentation among his own converts, but his act was wise, friendly and Christlike.

It is interesting to note that, so far as the evidence goes, this scheme was successful in impressing the Christians at Jerusalem with a conviction of Paul's sincerity and wise leadership. The writer of the narrative in the Book of Acts evidently regarded the series of events as ordained of God and conducted by Him.

The apostle's plan was interfered with by the attack upon him of some non-Christians from Asia whose enmity he had escaped not long before. They were ready

to seize upon any pretext for attacking him. When his week of purification was drawing to a close, these Jews, who recognized him as their enemy, with strong appeals to the prejudices of the Jews, aroused a frenzied mob.



One of the Tablets on the "Soreg" in the Temple.

The "Soreg" was a low stone balustrade marking the boundary between the outer and inner courts in the temple. On it were tablets bearing inscriptions in Greek and Latin forbidding Gentiles to go within it on pain of death. One of these tablets was found in 1871, with this inscription in Greek: "No man of alien race is to enter within the balustrade or embankment that goes around the temple. If any one is caught, let him know that he has himself to blame for the death that will follow."

They identified him as the one who went everywhere deriding the Jewish race and the sacred law and the holy temple, and specifically charged him with the crime of deliberately defiling the inner temple by introducing thither those who were not Jews. This would have been in defiance of a warning conspicuously posted

along the balustrade which separated the great outer court into which all peoples could come from the inner courts which only Jews could enter. Of course it was not true, but a Jewish mob rarely stopped to investigate. All ran together at the outcry, seized Paul with the intention of putting him to death, and began dragging him out into the great outer court so as not to pollute the temple proper with his blood. The temple officers made haste to shut the gates, so that the responsibility should not be theirs.

Meanwhile tidings of the tumult had come to the chiliarch or tribune in charge of the soldiers in the tower of Antonia, from which a stairway led directly into the outer court. He sent soldiers in a hurry, who laid hold of Paul and bound him securely, then sought the cause of the uproar. Unable to determine this they took



Paul to the castle. So great was the pressure of the angry crowd that to reach the stairway with their prisoner the soldiers had to carry him.

The dignity, self-possession and courage of Paul at this trying juncture were impressive. Bound as he was with chains, covered with dust and blood, he demanded and received a courtesy which the chief captain would not commonly concede to one charged with crime. He asked for permission to speak to the multitude. Addressing the people in their own vernacular, he declared himself to be one of themselves, educated as a Pharisee and zealous in every form of persecution. He reminded them of the havoc he wrought and of his commission to go to Damascus for a similar purpose. Here Jesus had revealed Himself and claimed Saul as His own, and set him apart for service. Later, when at Jerusalem, praying in the temple, he had received a definite commission for missionary service among the Gentiles.

These words were enough to drive his excitable audience to frenzy. Apparently the attempt at conciliation had been a disastrous failure. So Paul might well have thought. Yet it had quite the opposite result. It led, to be sure, to Paul's detention for some years in prison, but the time was by no means lost. For twenty years Paul had been incessantly active. Beyond all else he now needed time to think.

A spirit of compromise which ignores the principles upon which right action should be based finds no real justification from Paul's willingness to stand sponsor for the Nazirites. A true compromise is one which is born of courage, not fear, which unites brethren by fair concessions to prejudice or habit, and which promotes the growth and greatness of the kingdom.

**Chapter 38. Paul's Removal to Cæsarea. Acts 22:23 — 23:35. About A.D. 58.**

When the apostle, in his speech from the steps of the Castle Antonia, referred to the Gentiles, his appeal to the multitude came to an abrupt conclusion, for the people with one accord cried out, "Away with such a fellow; it is not fit that he should live!" They were so beside themselves with wrath that the chiliarch withdrew Paul into the castle itself. Taking for granted his wickedness in some respects, Lysias gave orders that Paul should be scourged in order to obtain the truth from his own lips. With complete self-possession, before the cruel lash was applied, Paul asked the officer in whose charge he was whether it was lawful to scourge a Roman without due reason in law. The knowledge that he possessed Roman citizenship led at once to considerate treatment by all. It was a privilege highly valued, obtained sometimes at great cost and always respected.

The next day the chiliarch brought Paul before the most representative Jewish body, the Sanhedrin. Through them he hoped to discover the nature of Paul's offense. But it was soon evident to Paul that he could hope for little consideration from the Sanhedrin as a body. It was violently prejudiced against him. Even when he sought in a conciliatory appeal to arouse their friendliness, or at least their tolerance, the high priest commanded that he, as a prisoner, be smitten on the mouth as a warning to keep quiet. Justly angered Paul made a sharp rejoinder, for which he partly apologized when he was told that his critic was the high priest. It is not so strange that the apostle did not distinguish the high priest. He wore on ordinary occasions no distinctive dress, and may have been personally unknown to Paul.

The council was not really there to render a real judgment or to tell the truth, and Paul well knew it. Seeing that his only way of averting a hostile decision, which under any circumstances would have injured his cause

in Roman estimation, was to take shrewd and quick advantage of their theological differences, the apostle altered the issue and got the opposing sects to warring over him. Declaring that he was a Pharisee born and bred, and that the issue in his case related to the resurrection, he cleverly led the members of the two great parties, with whom the resurrection was a frequent theme for discussion, into a vigorous wrangle which turned their attention away from Paul's own character to this matter of controversy and even led some of the Pharisaic scribes to begin to defend or excuse him. In the end Lysias had to rescue Paul again from the mob which was disputing over and about him.

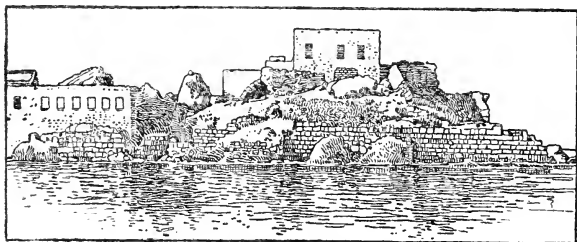
That night Paul had a cheering vision. The Lord Himself stood at his side and bade him have cheer. Despite his courage the apostle needed the message. His future looked dark indeed. But he was assured that he was yet to be a witness-bearer at Rome itself. There was to be the climax of his active ministry.

But Paul's enemies were by no means daunted. By the next morning an agreement had been formed by a group of Jews that they would kill him before they touched food again. Doubtless they anticipated little difficulty in accomplishing their purpose, but such rash vows were given absolution without much difficulty. These assassins secured the active co-operation of some of the Sanhedrists, who agreed to ask Lysias to bring Paul down again to them for further examination. Fortunately for Paul, he had a nephew who must have been highly connected. This lad happened to hear about the plot and told Paul, who at once referred him to the chiliarch, Lysias, who was deeply impressed by his narrative.

Paul's family relations are rather obscure. Ramsay points out with justice that this sister's son cannot have been a Christian, and must have belonged to some very influential coterie among the leading Jewish families of Jerusalem.

His finances at this critical period are of interest. His

status as a prisoner implies that he was regarded as a man of means. Not much earlier, however, he had been glorying over the recollection of an independence gained by severe, daily labor, which was made necessary by unquestioned poverty. In some way his condition was altered. Two suppositions have been made to account for this. One is that of Ramsay, that in some way, either through the death of his father or by a change of attitude within his own family, Paul had come into control at last of his rightful portion of the family estate. The other assumes that the silence of Acts regarding the receipt by the church at Jerusalem of the gifts brought by Paul and his company is significant. Before Paul could hand it over, he was perhaps seized and in-



**View on the Mole, in Cæsarea.**

Sometimes called the prison of St. Paul, but this is undoubtedly a mistake, since he was confined in Herod's palace on the mainland. This building was probably erected by the Crusaders.

carcerated. In that case, how readily and gladly would the donors of the funds authorize their trustees to use a portion at least for the benefit of their beloved brother in Christ. The former theory is perhaps the more likely one.

The chiliarch lost no time in placing his prisoner out of harm's way. He ordered at once a large escort of foot-soldiers and horsemen to proceed at once to Cæsarea, taking Paul with them to Felix, the procurator, who dwelt at that city, rather than in Jerusalem. Cæsarea had been, ever since the days of Herod the

Great, the real political capital of Palestine, and the favored abode of the Roman rulers. Felix, the procurator, had extensive powers. He could deal with Paul much as he wished. A man of low origin, he was chiefly distinguished for license, severity and favoritism. But even so, he was better as a judge than the Sanhedrin, whose decisions were made in advance of the facts.

Lysias forwarded with the cavalcade a letter which is full of interest, not alone as indicating the form of such a note passed between two men of standing, but as showing how readily men can re-state facts in a light favorable to themselves when necessary. Lysias represents himself as Paul's friend and defender, more than ready to support the dignity of Rome.

This act of Lysias' was shrewd. It typified the methods by which the Romans found it necessary to deal with their Jewish subjects at this time. The Jewish people were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with existing conditions. They were a very impressionable people. The least cause was liable to lead to a virtual insurrection during which thousands would be slain and armies set in motion. Lysias could easily see that Paul was a dangerous man to have in Jerusalem. For some reason the Jewish mob, fanatical and unreasoning at all times, hated him intensely and was thrown into a tempest of rage by his mere appearance. Lysias could not fathom the reason and had been unable to get the representatives of the people to state it. Finding that Paul was one whom he must treat with consideration and protect at all hazards, he quickly and secretly removed him to Cæsarea and shifted all responsibility to his superior officer, Felix.

How impressive the power, so ready to protect its own, that the mere claim of Roman citizenship converted surly and cruel officers into those who were complaisant and courteous! No wonder that Christian thinking has been dominated by the imperial idea.

Paul was a man of sound sense. He would take a scourging and bear it manfully when occasion arose,

but he did not crave martyrdom for its own sake. A Christian has due rights of which it is no less his duty than his privilege to take advantage.

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### **Chapter 39. Paul's Grappling with Paganism and Judaism Alike : A Review.**

The four years or so of Paul's life between the beginning of his last great tour and the blocking of his active career at Jerusalem were of supreme importance in the history of the religious development of mankind. Circumstances forced the apostle to grapple with some of the greatest problems that the religious life raises. He had to define in his own mind not alone the relationship of pagan religions to the faith preached by Jesus and the apostles, but even more sharply the relationship between that faith and Judaism. At the same time he was dealing with the conditions of organized paganism in a great and representative city and with the life of an organized and independent Christian community in another great center.

To grade these great tasks in the order of their importance is manifestly impossible. They were each but phases of the advance in the comprehension of the mutual linking of the grace of God with the life of man which Paul himself was enabled to further more than most men. His method was not the philosophical, but the practical. He considered the situation and acted upon it first ; later on he formulated his reasons.

The active missionary campaign in Asia, with headquarters at Ephesus, was in itself a great achievement. The apostolic leader settled down in a thickly populated and resourceful province of the empire, at its capital city, the very heart of pagan strength, and began a course of organized evangelization, rarely if ever surpassed for rapid results. Paul himself, according to the narrative, remained at Ephesus or was there predomi-

nantly. But he must at the same time have been directing and inspiring the movements of a number of helpers who covered the surrounding country. Among them all the province was quickly stirred, and with such efficiency that the silversmiths of Ephesus found their trade seriously cut down. The riot at Ephesus was the best possible proof of the success of Paul's campaign, but an equally noteworthy and more lasting evidence was the existence in subsequent years of the "churches in Asia," founded to endure.

Meanwhile there pressed upon him daily "anxiety for all the churches." While actively engaged in disputation and in oversight of this campaign in Asia, he had much cause for solicitude lest his Jewish opponents should undermine the confidence reposed in him by his own churches. The Judaizers were blocked in Galatia, yet they were the more active elsewhere. There is only the slight hint in Philippians 3 : 2-4 to indicate that the Macedonian churches were troubled by the emissaries of the partizans in Judea, masquerading as direct representatives of James, the Lord's brother, and the elders at Jerusalem. But in Greece and especially at Corinth there was much trouble. Party spirit had become rife in the Christian community, aroused in large measure by the quiet nurture of a spirit of independence and of opposition to Paul by those who were even more concerned to thwart his purposes and antagonize his policy than they were to exalt themselves or their ideas.

Paul was cut to the heart again to find that any of his disciples were capable of thus turning against him and of even listening to such baseless charges as those which were busily circulated. Any slander which could do duty in breaking down his hold upon the Christian community was freely used. But, as in the case of the Galatian churches, he gave sturdy battle to his traducers, and, what is far more important for our purpose, he stated and restated his positions, defining them with increasing clearness until the Judaizing faction was deprived of all power to do further harm. When the out-

come of such a contest was the epistle to the Romans with its masterly setting forth of the adequacy of the conception of salvation through faith in Christ, and of the preparatory function of Judaism, we can really rejoice over Paul's tribulations. It needed such a crisis to arouse his greatest powers and bring these truths to complete formulation.

But what about the fortunes of the individual churches! Paul's dealings with the church at Corinth had great significance for the Church universal. Had it not been for their tendency to over-emphasize the "gift" of incoherent religious speech, how could the apostle have had occasion to set a supreme value on that which upbuilds in speech or action and to glorify the indwelling spirit of love. Had not the church submitted for his judgment a series of knotty questions, how would he have shown the true way of attempting a solution of such things? The problems were local, but his method was eternal. "Settle your problems," he virtually said, "in the light of comprehending principles. Do not ask whether you may drink or smoke or be gluttonous. Simply remember that your bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit."

Had the church failed to raise the issues of morality and the standards which they should enforce upon church members, how would Paul's noble declarations regarding the motives which should control the acts of every man and the conduct of every church have been given expression? We may finally rejoice at the covert attacks upon the apostle, since they stung him into a declaration of his inner motives and a review of his eventful life.

Along with these varied causes for concern, Paul had on his heart an engrossing desire. He hoped to be able to bring about a fraternal union of the two separated sections of the Christian church, the Christians of Judea, whose thinking and practice were molded by the Judaism of which they were a part, and the Christians of the Greek world, whose complete salvation without recourse



to Judaism Paul had maintained. They might not be made to agree in all things, but they could regard each other as brethren. Paul sought to bring this about by generous gifts in token of Christian love from the Gentile churches to those in Judea. His determination led to his arrest, and to a complete change of his course of ministry. Probably it was successful or measurably so, but of this there is no clear-cut proof.

The outcome of this period most instructive of all is the fuller opportunity given to every one to consider a truly great personality. Biography in the making is most impressive. No one can read Paul's words of self-defense and refrain from a sincere and grateful tribute to his generosity as well as masterfulness, to his consideration for his followers as well as wisdom in forming their ideas, to his sincere humility in unimportant matters as well as aggressiveness in those which he deemed critical. Like his great Master, he beckoned men to follow; he filled them with his spirit; he conquered them by his goodness.

**Chapter 40. Paul's Appeal to Cæsar. Acts 24 : 1—25 : 12.**  
**About A. D. 58-60.**

With the admission of the great apostle within the walls of the splendid palace of Herod at Cæsarea, the official residence of the Roman procurators, a period of his life began which was of momentous significance for the Christian church. To his followers this long incarceration must have seem an unrelieved calamity for all concerned; they would have been thinking of the sudden stoppage of a career of fruitful missionary activity. No doubt his own restless, ardent spirit chafed sorely over the enforced idleness, at a time when he was hoping to enter upon a campaign at Rome and throughout the little-known West. He needed the assurance of God's purpose, which his vision at Jerusalem would have given him, in order to submit with patience and resignation to the delay.

And yet this detention in prison was really a most beneficent circumstance alike to Paul, to his churches, and to Christendom. He had been for twenty years keeping up a rapid pace of evangelization. The responsibility for entering new regions and for ministering to the churches thus organized pressed upon his heart. He had no such experience as leisure. His productiveness had been forced upon him by these very responsibilities. Every single letter of the six already written to the churches, excepting, possibly, that to the Romans, had been written to meet some emergency, little or large, personal or social, casual or important, among these churches. Even that latest and most formal letter had been called out by the desire to anticipate his coming work at Rome and to make an explicit presentation of his "Gospel."

The first value of his leisure was in the relief from the immediate pressure of this insistent problem of church extension and development. Unable to respond to any calls, Paul could think of the church at large, of its strength or weakness, its triumphs and perils, its

past and future. He was, in the second place, enabled to deal more effectively with the current problems of the church. It is not unreasonable to suppose that, during this long waiting at Cæsarea, with its large measure of freedom of intercourse, Paul received many a delegation from his own churches and from the more liberal ones of Palestine; that he was able to cement in some degree by conference with the leaders of the church at Jerusalem the friendly union of the Palestinian and Gentile sections of the Christian church, on which he had set his heart; and that he encouraged Luke, who was afterward his fellow-voyager to Rome, to begin that work of research in Palestine which made possible, years later, the noble gospel which sets forth the Christ as one who belonged, not to Judea or to the Jewish race, but to the whole inhabited world, the Saviour of mankind. But the largest value of this detention, after all, to the church was in the opportunity given to Paul to think through the questions which were troubling the growing churches, and to give a formulation to them which was relatively permanent. The wonderful letters to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians could scarcely have been written without this intervening period of quiet meditation. True the two years at Cæsarea were far from being wasted years.

A thoughtful reader of the Book of Acts wonders to himself at the relative preponderance given to the details of Paul's arrest, the various trials and the voyage to Rome. They occupy what seems, at first, a disproportioned number of chapters. The answer cannot be the mere possession, on the part of the writer, of an abundance of first-hand information regarding this period. The narrative of Acts is far too skilfully developed to be thus explained. The compiler was in full control of his material, and shaped its development in accordance with his own purpose. In view of this fact the space accorded to the trials, at Cæsarea and elsewhere is significant, and the view of Ramsay, Bartlet and others is reasonable. It is that one great purpose of

the author of Acts was to demonstrate the approval on the part of the Roman authorities of the spirit and acts of early Christianity and their repeated deliverance of Paul from hostile Jewish attack.

Be that as it may, there is a particular interest in the details of this trial before Felix. It was not Paul's first appearance before a Roman tribunal at the instance of Jewish enemies, but it was more of a crisis than usual. His accusers were the most representative men at Jerusalem. They had engaged an eloquent advocate. They were determined to compass his death. Only the fact that Paul had in some way impressed both Lysias and Felix with a sense of his real importance saved him from being yielded to his foes as an easy method of quieting their turbulence.

The advocate made a specious plea, embellished and introduced with oratorical art. He claimed that Paul was a fomenter of sedition, a ringleader of a pestilent sect and a profaner of the temple, and cited all who had accompanied him in support of these charges.

But Felix was not a man to be readily deceived. He had had long experience in dealing with dangerous men. He knew, almost by instinct, that Paul was neither a revolutionist nor a traitor, and that the trouble was some technical matter of Judaism, in relation to which, like all Romans, his ignorance was only exceeded by his contempt. His judgment was supported by Paul's calm and convincing denial. He had been in Jerusalem, he said, but a few days, at most, had been making no tumult, and had acted only in reverent fashion while at the temple. He admitted being a Christian, but declared that it was no crime in Roman jurisprudence.

Felix availed himself of an opportunity to defer the case and have further contact with this interesting personality. With his Jewish wife, Drusilla, he repeatedly listened to Paul's discourse. With his accustomed earnestness the apostle argued regarding the true God, human responsibility to men and to Him, and the time of reckoning soon to come. He fairly overawed the

hardened procurator who had a long roll of crimes to atone for, but to little effect. The greed of gain had taken such possession of Felix that he looked on office only as a means of plunder. Hoping that Paul would pay liberally to be freed, Felix detained him until he himself was supplanted by Festus, and then left him a prisoner as a sop to Jewish sentiment.

The new procurator was inclined to use Paul as a means of making himself popular with the Jews by letting their great council decide his case. Consequently Paul appealed, as a Roman citizen of standing, to the emperor. In consequence of Paul's demand, he ultimately went to Rome.

Paul's submission to circumstances savored of common sense. He held to his rights tenaciously, and did his utmost to order his life as he conceived it should develop.

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**Chapter 41. Paul's Defense before Agrippa. Acts 25:13—26:32. About A. D. 60.**

Paul was eminently a fair adversary. He was a formidable antagonist, as many who sought to oppose him found to their cost, yet he met men on their own ground. It is not unreasonable to suppose that he had cherished the hope that from Festus he would receive the proper treatment of his case. The procurator's intentions may have been good (Acts 25:20), but Luke's interpretation (25:9) of his governing motive seems dependable. He cared nothing about Paul as an individual; and judged it better to sacrifice one man, if, by doing so, he could bring under his influence a turbulent and unreasonable race. But Festus underestimated Paul. His was a case which could not be settled in the manner so often practised in the provinces. He knew his rights as a Roman citizen and was able through his friends to have them sustained.

To appeal to the emperor at Rome was by no means a simple matter in that day. Any governor could refuse to entertain such an appeal, if he ventured to meet the consequences of an error of judgment on his own part in the matter. He was no mere executive automaton. He would send to the emperor only important cases. Moreover, the expense attendant upon such appeals was formidable, even as in our own court procedure to-day. Paul must have deliberately made up his mind that, unless Festus gave signs of dealing with him fairly and promptly, he would appeal.

It is an open question whether or not he made a mistake in so doing. The emperor then on the throne was Nero. He was young and frivolous and careless alike of justice or mercy, yet had been guided in matters of state by older and wiser counsellors. When Paul's case came to its long deferred trial, all this had altered. Not only had Nero broken loose from all restraint, but had been induced to charge against the sect of Christians the responsibility for the crimes which he and his satellites had committed. We may possibly explain the strange absence of definite information at the close of the Acts regarding Paul by regarding the silence as significant, not of a continuing third volume of history, as Ramsay suggests, but of the disastrous result of the solemn appeal to Cæsar, and of the fulfilment of Paul's earlier forebodings.

Not long after Festus and his council had determined that Paul's appeal would be allowed, King Herod Agrippa came to make the procurator an official visit. This Agrippa was the son of the Herod, also called Agrippa, referred to in Acts, ch. 12, who had died a loathsome death in A. D. 44. He had been brought up at Rome, and was an intimate friend of emperors and courtiers alike. Consequently his career had been one of rapid promotion. About eight years before the time of this incident he had been given the territory formally ruled by Herod Philip (Luke 3:1) with the coveted title of king. Three years later the greater part

of Galilee was added to his domain, leaving only Judea and Samaria under the direct control of the procurators. He was thus a sovereign of marked dignity and importance, and conducted himself so shrewdly that he was liked both by the Roman overlords and by the Jewish nation. Like all of the Herodian family, however, his grace of manner masked a corrupt and selfish heart. He was a real friend to no one.

The arrival of King Agrippa led Festus to seek his advice regarding Paul, whose case seemed very puzzling to the procurator. It turned on matters of technical religious importance, wholly out of his range of experi-



**A Roman Hall of Justice.**

Showing the raised platform on which the judges sat, with the lictors carrying the fasces, the emblem of authority, on either side. These basilicas, which were the largest Roman halls of meeting, are said to have been copied by the early Christians for their churches, many of which are still called basilicas.

ence or interest. He had determined to send his prisoner to Rome, as soon as opportunity should offer, but was at a loss to know how to draw up a set of charges which would not expose himself to ridicule or rebuke from his superior authorities. Agrippa, he thought, would be able, after hearing Paul's own declarations, to assist him in preparing the official transcript of the case. A brilliant gathering was convened, the very next day, in the hall of judgment. The king and his consort, with those whose importance gave them a place in what was really a social function rather than a trial, made an impressive spectacle. Before them was

brought the prisoner, to whose versatile mind the occasion seemed an opportunity.

The two charges made by his accusers which Paul admitted were that he was a Christian; and a leader of Christians. He addressed a man of the world, yet one who well knew the ingrained beliefs of his Jewish subjects and others who quite possibly shared them. Rarely within the limits of Palestine could Paul have such an audience, rivalling in dignity and official significance, the circle that had faced him that last day at Jerusalem.

His address was intended for those of Jewish training. It elaborated an absolute excuse for such a course as he had taken. Every loyal Jew admitted that the evident command of God would be binding upon the conscience and the activity of every son of Israel to the setting aside of whatever stood in the way.

Beginning, therefore, with a courteous expression of his recognition of the insight and sympathy which he might fairly count upon, in view of Agrippa's acquaintance with Judaism and of his sense of justice, the apostle appealed to the general knowledge of the fact that he had been brought up a zealous and scrupulous Pharisee and declared that his present plight was due to his desire to witness concerning the fulfilment of the promise which a Pharisee existed to secure. At the outset of his career, as every one knew, he had been a leader of the bitter and determined persecution of the Christian sect. He had even planned to punish its adherents wherever found. Commissioned to this end by the authorities of Judaism he had journeyed to Damascus, and on the way, at mid-day, had suddenly seen a vision and heard a voice which interpreted to him his inmost thought. Responding to what he knew to be a Divine manifestation, he had been claimed by God from that day as his witness-bearer and appointed for apostleship.

According to Paul's words, as reported in this connection, he was active from the first as an apostle to the Gentiles. We would naturally infer that he was conscious of this commission from the time of the vision.

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but such a conclusion is not obligatory. Paul's words surely imply that his work for the Gentiles was in God's mind when the vision was granted, and that he had himself no more than fairly interpreted the Old Testament Scriptures.

When the eloquent prisoner ceased to relate his thrilling experience and talked of Moses and a Christ and resurrection, Festus thought he was becoming incoherent, and said, to use Ramsay's clever phrase, "Paul, Paul, you are a great philosopher, but you have no common sense." But Paul seized this half-contemptuous remark as a basis for an appeal to Agrippa to recognize the reality and importance of that which Paul had been saying. Agrippa was not taken off his guard. "The first I know you will make me out a Christian," he easily replied. Paul had no satisfaction from him, but closed the interview with his customary dignity and earnestness. "Would to God that in any fashion I might bring all who hear me to my position, except these bonds."

A great-souled hero, true to his best self in the face of patronage or ridicule or hostility or any other attitude on the part of great or small was the apostle Paul. Always ready with his testimony to what he held to be the truth, he was also courteously fair to any other new point, a true "Christian gentleman."

**Chapter 42. The Voyage to Rome. Acts 27 : 1—28 : 15.  
About A. D. 61, 62.**

The narrative of the long voyage to Rome with its delays and perplexities, its dangers and triumphs, has justly been termed one of the most vivid and striking stories preserved in the New Testament. It abounds with details which bespeak the eyewitness as well as the friendly biographer. Yet the one who penned it was not thinking so much of making a diary of the voyage as of enhancing the apostle's repute for courage, self-control, good sense and sincere faith.

The narrative has met the test of expert critical investigation and is everywhere admitted to be a first-hand account of the events described, of great value geographically and religiously. It adds the completing touch to the portraiture of the hero of the apostolic age, while being "the most valuable record of navigation which has come to us from ancient times."

A true hero Paul showed himself to be amid the scenes of peril and disaster. His was the personality around whom all others gathered, whose calmness and force gave every one courage and energy. Christianity had no more effective witness than the great-souled and stout-hearted apostle, whose confidence in God was unshakable and unailing.

The interesting details of the voyage from Cæsarea to Malta have been exhaustingly discussed in Smith's famous monograph, "*The Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul*," and by Ramsay, in "*St. Paul the Traveller*." Not all authorities agree as to minor details; but concerning the voyage as a whole there is little difference of opinion.

The "we" of the first verse included Paul, Luke and Aristarchus. Ramsay argues that they must have gone with Paul as his slaves, passing as such. His reasons for so thinking are that they would not have been allowed to accompany Paul as his friends, and that Paul was treated with the deference and courtesy which im-

plied his recognition as a man of importance. If the vessel was, as Ramsay holds, an imperial ship, belonging to the Alexandrian transport service, Paul's friends may not have had the status of passengers; if, as Wendt thinks, it was a privately owned vessel, made use of as a convenience by the centurion, they may have been able to take independent passage. We may be sure, in any event, that Luke and Aristarchus would have accepted any status, however menial, in order to accompany and minister to their beloved leader.

Paul was in the charge of a high-minded centurion named Julius, who dealt with him courteously and with consideration. He belonged, according to our narrative, to the "Augustan cohort," which means that he was either an officer of one of the auxiliary or provincial companies, or, as Ramsay conjectures, that he was a legionary centurion on detached service for communication between the emperor and his armies in the provinces. He had other prisoners under his charge and a considerable number of soldiers.

They embarked on an Adramyttian coaster which was bound homeward, there being probably no available vessel ready to sail for Rome. Stopping one by one in the harbors of the Syrian coast or of Asia, they were likely to pick up such a vessel as they needed. On the second day out from Cæsarea the ship touched at Sidon, where Paul received permission to go ashore and meet the Christian community. It must have been to him a precious privilege to mingle freely once more among those who loved and venerated him. It was all over too soon. Probably it was their last sight of the great-hearted apostle and his last experience of the region at once so dear to him and so hostile.

Continuing the ship worked its way along east of Cyprus until it reached the Cilician coast and then from point to point, until it came to Myra, one of the notable ports for the traffic of the Mediterranean. Ships bound to and from Egypt invariably called at this port, from which under a favoring breeze they could sail

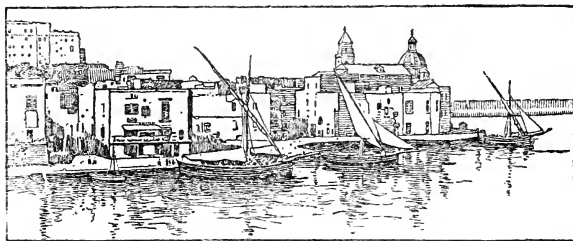
straight to Alexandria, and to which they could beat their way up the coast from Egypt. Egypt was a granary for Rome and the grain trade between the two countries was of great magnitude and importance. The ship which the centurion found at Myra was one of the vessels engaged in this sort of commerce. It was loaded with wheat and bound for Rome. From the fact that it could carry two hundred and seventy-eight passengers we may infer that it was of considerable size. Conybeare and Howson estimate it at five hundred tons burden.

The second voyage progressed rather slowly, and they were forced at last to find shelter on the south shore of Crete in the harbor of Fair Havens. Here for some time they lay weatherbound, until the dangerous season for navigation had well begun. Paul advised wintering at Fair Havens, but the centurion, whose decision seemed preponderant, not unnaturally preferred to follow the advice of the sailing-master and the captain, who desired to make every effort to reach a better harbor.

A moderate breeze arising from the south, the captain seized the chance to make the desired harbor, only forty miles away. But a sudden, eddying squall blew down with tremendous force from the towering mountains which lined the coast, and drove the ship before it. Sheltered slightly behind the little island of Cauda, it was possible to haul in and make fast the boat, to undergird the badly strained vessel with cables and to shorten sail, leaving just enough spread to keep the ship from helpless drifting. Their great danger was that the ship would founder under such a continual strain. The sailors therefore began to throw overboard the cargo and the fittings of the vessel, so as to lighten it. Day after day the storm continued. Sailors and passengers alike lost hope. But at this emergency Paul came as ever to the rescue. With calmness and the courage born of conviction he assured them that in a vision he had been told that all would escape.

On the fourteenth night the sailors became certain that the ship was drawing near to land. Fearing a rocky coast they cast out four anchors and waited for daylight. Meanwhile some of the sailors attempted to desert but were prevented by Paul's keenness and vigilance. At this moment of anxiety and uncertainty Paul with supreme common sense, alive to the fact that they needed strength for the struggle of the morrow, encouraged all to take food, setting an example himself.

When daylight came they saw that the coast was unfamiliar but noted a sandy beach onto which they hoped to drive the vessel. Making for this the vessel



**Puteoli. Paul's Landing-place in Italy.**

grounded unexpectedly and began to be broken by the violence of the waves. At this juncture the soldiers desired to kill the prisoners, for whom they, not the sailors, were responsible, but Julius, with a lively sense of their obligations to Paul, commanded that every one should be allowed to get to shore.

The island on which they had been wrecked was Malta. The inhabitants were barbarous only in the sense of being unable to speak Greek. They treated the shipwrecked company with kindness and generosity as long as they remained on the island. This kindness Paul fully repaid by healing the father of the chief magistrate and many others who were diseased.

At last, however, another grain ship was found which was ready to sail for Rome. It quickly reached Puteoli,

whence the remainder of the journey would be overland. Both there and nearer Rome Paul came into such friendly and unexpected contact with the Christian brethren that it gave him new courage and confidence for the trial which awaited him.

By his calm courage, his thoughtful good sense and his absolute reliance upon God, Paul had been a real savior of those with whom he voyaged. His was the privilege of every true Christian, to exhibit the "power of an endless life."

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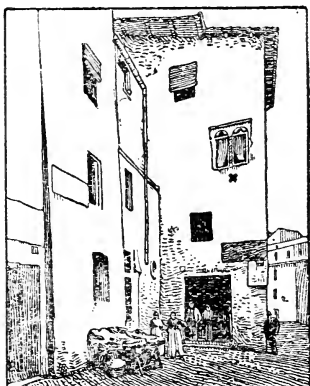
**Chapter 43. Paul a Prisoner at Rome. Acts 28:16-31;  
Rom. ch. 16; Phil. 1:12-26. About A.D. 61-63.**

The hearty welcome which he received from representatives of the Christian churches at Puteoli and at Rome gave gladness of heart and encouragement to Paul. Again he was among his friends and well-wishers, those with whom he could have fellowship and through whom he could work. It is idle to ask whether this friendly reception grew out of the letter sent from Corinth two or more years before or rested upon the admiration and confidence which all Gentile Christians must have felt toward the apostle. If the sixteenth chapter of the letter to the Romans is a genuine part of the letter, as the majority of students find no difficulty in believing, then Paul found among those who came to greet him some at least whom he had known in his missionary journeyings in Asia and Greece. If Phœbe, who had been such a valued friend, and Prisca and Aquila, his trusted fellow-workers, and Epænetus, his first convert in Asia, were still at Rome, with what overflowing joy the apostle would have greeted them! If the rest of those saluted in that chapter by name or any portion of them were among the group which walked out forty miles to meet him at the Market of Appius, or ten miles nearer, at the Three Taverns, there is no occa-

sion for surprise at the warmth of Paul's reception or at the good effect of it upon him. The presence of loyal friends, who loved him for his own sake and were eager to join with him in sacrificial service, was a balm which quickly healed the apostle's distress and gave him cheer.

The centurion, Julius, must have testified strongly to the character of Paul, and to his own conviction of his innocence, for the latter was treated, from the Roman point of view, with great leniency. The stern spirit of

justice, which pervaded the administration of Roman law, led that people to be slow to overlook offenses as well as prompt in dealing with them. Paul was under serious charges and, despite his evident nobleness and probable freedom from guilt, was to be closely guarded until properly acquitted. He was evidently given permission to live in lodgings of his own, although kept under the unceasingly vigilant surveillance of a soldier



**Traditional House of St. Paul, in Rome.**

to whom he was fastened by a light wrist-chain. At his own house he was free to receive whom he chose and to do as he would, subject only to the presence and the whims of the soldier. So courteous and companionable a man as Paul soon made subjection of his guards, so that they hindered him in the least possible degree. He thus converted a trying situation into an opportunity.

On the third or fourth day after his arrival Paul invited the leaders among the Jews to meet him. He doubtless wished, if possible, to conciliate them and to anticipate the false reports which were sure to come from Judea at the earliest possible moment. It is surprising to note that they declared themselves unaware

of the case against Paul, and in the dark as to the nature of the Christian sect of whose existence and bad name among the Jews they were fully informed. Doubtless with them as with the leaders in Jerusalem at the first, Christianity had simply been recognized as a fanatical movement or new sect of Judaism. Of this sort of thing Judaism was fairly tolerant. Its leaders could calmly ignore such developments, so long as the adherents of these sects were loyal to the general principles of Judaism.

This personal meeting led to another at which Paul presented his Gospel to a large assembly. All day long he set forth his views of the fulfilment through Jesus of the hopes of the prophets. Some of his hearers believed; many were indifferent. There was much fruitless discussion and at last Paul dismissed them with the declaration that Isaiah's prophetic word regarding his practically ineffective mission to the men of Judah was finding a continuing fulfilment in them. They were unwilling to consider God's message with unprejudiced minds. Hence it would be set before the Gentiles who were ready to listen to it. His last words carried a note of assurance and triumph, "They will also hear." Paul was not disheartened by the unwillingness of his Jewish brethren to listen to his words, for he knew that by the grace of God the message had been received before and had full confidence that it would be the means of bringing men and women to a loving acceptance of Christ as their Saviour in the days to come.

How Paul measured those days we can only conjecture. Probably he had hoped for a speedy trial and confidently expected a release. The reasons for the long delay are nowhere stated. Bartlet calls attention to the probability that the "first five years" of Nero's reign, during which that young prince was much under the guidance of Seneca, his old tutor, and of Burrus, the noble-minded prætorian prefect, were now passed. Burrus died in A. D. 62, and was succeeded by Tigellinus, one of Nero's most profligate and worthless associ-



ates, a man incapable, save by accident, of acting from motives of justice. Under their joint *régime* anything might happen.

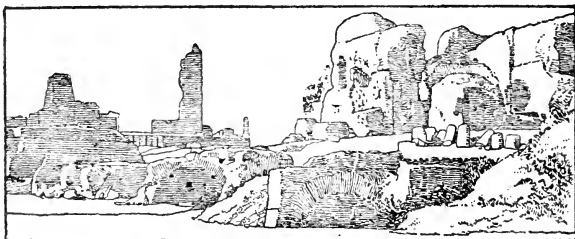
Toward the end of Paul's stay in Rome he wrote the beautiful letter of thankful acknowledgment of their generous friendship which we know as his letter to the Philippians. From the allusions in this letter to his experiences we gain some light upon the events of these two years. As the closing verse of Acts declares, he had been able to preach the Gospel with boldness and success, "unhindered." His apparent misfortunes had only served to advance his purposes. Even throughout the prætorian guard, to which his soldier companions belonged, he had made Christianity honored. His example of courage and zeal had stimulated his Christian brethren, so that they were likewise zealous in preaching. Even his enemies, in their desire to give him trouble, only aided in making Christian ideas known far and wide.

These two years were not, therefore, unfruitful, nor were they years of unhappiness. Paul believed in making use for noble ends of any situation in which he found himself. He would not be controlled by it, but became its master. The Christian is continually placed where he feels himself circumscribed and hindered. Like Paul, he may discover therein a new opportunity.

**Chapter 44. Paul's Letter to the Church at Philippi.**  
**Selections from Philippians. Written from prison**  
**between A. D. 61 and 63.**

While Paul was in prison at Cæsarea and at Rome he had found much time for careful meditation. For twenty years previous his life had been one of constant activity as an evangelist and overseer of the churches. Such letters as he wrote, with the single exception of the epistle to the Romans, were emergency letters, aimed at specific troubles, and made of permanent value because they gave expression to the mind of Christ and dealt with even petty problems in a noble, far-reaching, Christ-like way.

During these months of enforced inactivity or relative leisure the great apostle had come more and more



*From a photograph.*

**Ruins of the Palace of the Cæsars, in Rome.**

clearly to see that the great Christian remedy for all manner of evil was to cultivate Christlikeness, and that so to do was to enter into the religious inheritance of the ages, since Christ was the summation of all which they had helped to reveal regarding God.

The controversy regarding the value of circumcision and literal obedience to the Mosaic law had passed by. The Judaizers were no longer formidable, although not wholly eliminated. There was a growing sense of the unity of the church as a whole over which the apostolic leader could rejoice. The personal opposition to him-

self had ceased to be dangerous. But there was a new tendency, prevailing especially in the churches centering near Ephesus, toward ascetic practices as aids to holiness, and toward philosophical speculation with regard to the person of Christ, with which it was needful for him to deal. He avoided direct attack and adopted the vastly more effective method of urging upon his disciples a conception of Christ and a pattern of life which would of themselves set aside or obscure the speculations and the practices. Paul's method is more obvious in his letters sent directly to the churches of Asia, viz., Colossians and Ephesians, than in the letter he wrote to his Philippian friends.

The letter to Philippi was first of all a friendly letter, written to express Paul's gratitude toward the church which had so unfailingly and ungrudgingly come to his help in times of need, not because of any appeal on his part, but out of an overflowing heart of affectionate love. It is therefore a letter of recognition and encouragement, rather than a discussion of controverted matters. It is dominated by the glorious thought of the headship of Christ and refers to speculative matters only in an individual way. It is beyond question such a letter that no church receiving it would ever permit it to be lost. It reveals the apostle's noble self, his responsiveness, his deep affection, his generosity, his modesty and his wonderful courage. It shows also the growing simplicity and directness of his creed. "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

The epistle explains itself. It was probably written after the other three of this group of letters of the imprisonment at Rome. It was evidently occasioned (2:25) by the return of Epaphroditus to Philippi from Rome. The church had sent him to Rome to bear a generous gift to their beloved but imprisoned leader. Paul had detained him in Rome (2:25) to assist in evangelistic work. In the course of this he was infected with some disease (2:30) and became desperately ill. His convalescence was retarded (2:26) by his home-

sickness and anxiety lest the church should be disturbed over the news of his illness. Paul, therefore, thought best to despatch him to Philippi without delay (2:25) and sent along this model of friendly letters of acknowledgment, which gathers up, not only this last evidence of the generous thoughtfulness of the Philippians, but the many earlier testimonials (*e. g.* 2 Cor. 11:9) of their love.

It begins, as his letters usually do, with a salutation, which is unique, however, in containing a reference to officers of the church. It is the earliest reference in first hand New Testament writings to bishops or deacons.

The thanksgiving is noteworthy. There is nothing perfunctory in it. Paul gives expression to the joy with which he recurs in thankful prayer to their continuing fellowship in things spiritual from the very beginning, and to the tender love with which his heart is filled, and to the hope that they may so advance in sound Christian character and in insight and in goodness that their lives will abound in all manner of Christian fruitfulness (1:3-11).

Referring in passing to his situation as a prisoner, regarding which they would be anxious, Paul declares (1:12-18) that his imprisonment had resulted in promoting the preaching of Christ among the soldiers and in encouraging other Christians to boldness of speech. Not all were single-minded even among those who preached Christ, some so doing it as to embarrass Paul. But after all, in one way or another, Christ was proclaimed.

Such proclamation could but result in good so long as the apostle was sincere and brave. Whether he lived or died was immaterial. To die and be with the blessed Master, this was his preference; but yet, he would gladly live, if by living he could contribute to their religious growth (1:19-26). It was for them to be contented with nothing less than the finest and noblest type of life, to be steadfast and courageous under persecu-

tion, transforming it into an assurance of fellowship with Christ (1:27-30).

Then follows an affectionate appeal (2:1-5), in view of such spiritual blessings, to cultivate oneness of spirit and that glorious unselfishness which characterized Christ, who through putting Himself into the limitations of humanity and living a life of service made possible His exaltation and universal recognition (2:6-11). They were to be zealous in works of righteousness, recognizing the help of God, and to avoid being disputatious, in order to wield a strong influence among men.

Paul paused to pay a beautiful tribute to Timothy for his genuinely unselfish serviceableness, and to Epaphroditus, their messenger, who had proved himself a brave and zealous co-worker with Paul, who had been dangerously ill, but had been providentially spared to them and to him. Paul bade them receive him gladly and with every token of appreciation of his courageous friendship (2:19-30).

The apostle then touches upon matters which require a little friendly advice. He bids them beware of Judaizers and their boasts. Whatever they boasted about, Paul could claim in greater measure (3:1-6). But matters of this sort he counted as of minor importance, not to be compared with the value of a real knowledge of Christ, a knowledge of His personality, of His sacrificial spirit, an insight by experience into the suffering He must have undergone (3:7-11). This supreme attainment not even he could claim, but he was eagerly and constantly pressing toward it (3:12-16).

This spirit Paul would commend, warning his disciples to beware of the example of some who had given themselves over to self-indulgence. The life of the Christian must be in the heavens, then his Lord will make his body sometime to correspond (3:17—4:1).

With a personal word for some members of the church, Paul, in separate sentences, urges his friends to rejoice, to be gentle, to thankfully rest on God (4:2-7).

and, in unforgettable words, proclaims the ideals of life for which he has always stood (4: 8, 9).

The closing paragraph is another beautiful expression of his gratitude and joy over their generosity. Not because his need was relieved, for, if need be, he could endure privation cheerfully, but because it laid bare their loving hearts and their true faith in God. His last wish was that God would freely supply their spiritual needs out of the riches of His grace.

So gracefully and tenderly closes this friendly letter of thanks. Paul expressed his gratitude by trying to take them out upon the mountain top with him, and to give them a vision of the glorious kingdom of which they were all citizens. They who gained "the mind of Christ" would not be readily tempted by the petty thoughts of those who never knew Him.

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**Chapter 45. Paul's Plea to Philemon on Behalf of Onesimus. Philemon. Written between A.D. 61 and 63.**

Some one has said with reference to the letter of Paul to the Philippians that it is "in his happiest mood, the noblest reflection of his personal character." Quite possibly the careful reader of his exquisite note to Philemon would challenge the superlative. Where could he find a friendly plea more fitly framed, more delicately yet definitely urged and on a broader basis? How could the greatness and gentleness and personal friendliness of the apostle be made more apparent!

The note to Philemon, which we find tucked away at the end of the collection of epistles supposed to be Pauline, as if it were both the shortest and the least important, must have been sent to Colosse along with the letter to that church and the one intended for Laodicea (Col. 4: 16). It alludes to the same set of fel-

low workers (Philem. vss. 23, 24; cf. Col. 4:10, 12, 14) and salutes as a member of Philemon's household an Archippus, who is probably the very one given a friendly warning at the end of the letter to the church at Colosse (Col. 4:17).

It is a private letter to one whom Paul had converted to Christianity (vs. 19) and with whom he stood in close and friendly relations. Philemon must have been a man of prominence and substance. The church gathers weekly at his house (vs. 2). His son, Archippus, if we are warranted in so placing the one thus named, is an evangelist, a fellow soldier, with (Col. 4:17) a great opportunity before him.

The student of the writings of Paul comes to realize that we are by no means in possession of all that Paul wrote. The epistles to the Corinthians should be multiplied by two in order to represent the letters sent from him to them. There is much probability that he wrote more than two to the Thessalonians. It is scarcely credible that he never made written acknowledgment of the repeated gifts of the church at Philippi to him until the very end of his life. Moreover with his wide acquaintance and restless energy and constant interest in churches and individuals it seems not unreasonable to suppose that he put forth during the twenty years or so of his busy ministry a really voluminous correspondence, of which we have only a portion extant. This genial, affectionate, tactful note represents in all probability many others with which he delighted and inspired his faithful followers. Why it should have been spared from the oblivion which overtook the others we can only conjecture. When Paul wrote at all, he probably wrote in some such way as this, never foolishly or weakly. It is fortunate that one of his notes was preserved, that we might see a model of what a Christian letter may be.

The purpose of Paul in writing was to intercede on behalf of Onesimus, a former slave of Philemon, who had run away from his master and drifted to Rome,

where he had been converted under Paul's preaching. He had shown his gratitude by zealously devoting himself to Paul's personal service, and the apostle came to have a sincere regard for him. As a matter of principle, however, Paul felt that Onesimus ought to return to his master, whose lawful property he was. He despatches him along with Tychicus, carrying this personal note to his master.

And how could Philemon resist its seductiveness! Can any one question the probability that Onesimus went back to a relationship which was far different from the old bond service from which he had fled! He served once more, no doubt, but with pride in doing his best for conscience' sake and with friendly recognition on his master's part. From Paul's play on the name of the slave (vs. 11) we may perhaps infer that Onesimus had been a problem to his owner and may have needed discipline.

Paul's salutation is comprehensive and yet direct. Uniting Timothy, who was well known among the churches of Asia, with him in it, he addresses Philemon as an old and valued associate, Apphia, a lady who was probably his wife, and Archippus, the evangelist also mentioned in the letter to the church, probably his son, and finally the church which was accustomed to meet at his house. The time of stately edifices of worship had not come as yet. Christians met for their "Lord's day" services in private houses, in the open air at some secluded spot, wherever they might be undisturbed. They were very few and often very poor.

The thanksgiving is tactful but sincere. Paul had probably met Philemon at Ephesus but had not seen him for years. He alludes to the thankfulness ever in his heart over Philemon's course of life, his sturdy faith, his generous spirit of love, and declares that his constant prayer is that Philemon's Christian experience may ripen into an abounding in everything that makes for Christian perfection. Above all Paul rejoiced in his hospitality and helpfulness to his Christian brethren.



Here again we find an incidental reference to the sense of fellowship and mutual obligation which was so characteristic of early Christianity in its best phases.

Now Paul comes to the point. Although as an acknowledged apostle and leader of the Christian brotherhood he might command, he rather prefers to ask as a favor, in view of his years of hard service, his gray hairs and his present duress on behalf of the faith, that Onesimus, the runaway slave, once "Unprofitable" but now again truly "Profitable"—punning on the meaning of the name Onesimus, "Helpful"—be received back with forgiveness and consideration. Paul adds that Onesimus had become so helpful that he could hardly bear to send him away. He begged Philemon to treat him, not as a slave without rights, but as a Christian brother. If Onesimus had a debt remembered against him, let it be wiped out. Paul would gladly pay for it.

Paul's last appeal was that he should do what Christ would have him do. "Show me that you have the mind of Christ." He closes with an expression of his confidence that his release would soon come, and bespeaks Philemon's hospitality.

A delightful letter in every way, but noteworthy because of the way in which it dealt with an important social problem. Slavery was a universal fact of Paul's day, all forms of labor being carried on by slaves. Some were very degraded; many were intelligent; a few were cultured. They were at the mercy of their masters.

Christianity and slavery could not always coexist. The very essence of Christianity was self-determination, freedom, responsibility. The slaves listened eagerly to the teachings of the evangelists and apostles and entered the Christian brotherhood. They naturally chafed under the galling yoke of servitude in proportion as they realized the true significance and opportunity of manhood.

Paul dealt tactfully and wisely with this delicate situation. The recognition of their standing as Chris-

tian brethren was the sure starting-point of permanent emancipation. But he ever counseled slaves to be zealous to do their recognized duty. As if to help take away the sting of the word, Paul, at this period, delights to call himself "the slave of Jesus Christ," as if to say, servitude is no disgrace in itself, but may be made honorable and noble. He deals with the relations of slaves and masters in Colossians, Ephesians, First Timothy and Titus. The keynote of what he says is, "Ye serve the Lord Christ, not merely your human master. Let this glorify and irradiate your hard toil." To the masters he said, "Make these Christian slaves your partners, treat them as devoted brethren." Under such principles of action slavery was doomed.

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**Chapter 46. Paul's Letters to the Churches of Asia.  
Selections from Ephesians and Colossians. Written  
between A. D. 58—63.**

With the friendly note to Philemon of Colosse went at least two other letters of supreme importance to Christendom, representing, as they do, Paul's ripest thought and most impressive presentation of his fundamental Gospel. Through them he enabled his devoted followers to meet with confidence a form of belief far more subtle and dangerous than that for which the Judaizers were sponsors, perilous to faith because of its apparent simplicity and philosophical reasonableness, a danger only to be set aside by clear thinking and by the grasp of the fundamental conceptions of Christianity.

One of these letters was addressed to the church at Colosse, a Phrygian city of the Roman province of Asia, one of the three situated in the beautiful Lycus valley. It was of little importance, commercially far inferior to either Laodicea or Hierapolis, its neighbors. Paul had not founded the church at Colosse, except by indirect

tion; at least he had never visited it (Col. 2:1). Epaphras, who at the writing was with Paul (Col. 4:12, 13), had been the evangelist under whom the Colossian church came into being (Col. 1:7). This doubtless happened while Paul was conducting his great campaign at Ephesus.

From the reference in Colossians 4:16 we may infer that another letter given into the charge of Tychicus was intended first of all for the church at Laodicea. Each letter was to be passed along to the others of the larger group of churches to which they belonged. Whether this Laodicean letter is, as many suppose, the letter to the Ephesians or was a letter, otherwise unknown, sent along at this time with the two well-known epistles, cannot be surely determined.

One who closely examines the letter to the Ephesians clearly notes that it is a general letter, adapted to a group of sister-churches rather than a specific letter to some particular church. The words "at Ephesus" in verse 1 are wanting in the two best manuscripts, and are ignored by some of the earliest commentators. Probably, therefore, the epistle was intended by the apostle to be a circular letter for the instruction and stimulus of the group of churches for which Ephesus was a center. Like Colossians it deals with the speculative problems which seem to have been rife among these churches, asserting by way of greater and clearer spiritual uplift the glorious supremacy of Christ over the universal church and the entire adequacy of His power in heaven and on earth.

The inhabitants of the Lycus valley, Jews and pagans alike, were full of ideas which made their appearance in Christian thinking. The members of these churches, while sincere Christians at heart, found it hard to emancipate themselves from bondage to these ideas, so natural to them. They set a high value on asceticism. They often forgot that salvation is a moral and spiritual emancipation, and strove to attain to it by some form of enlightenment or by correct conduct which was

ordered by rules. Of such attainment they were very proud. It elevated its disciples above the masses.

By these speculations the sense of close relationship of the Christian with Christ was obscured and likewise the sense of the necessity of His redemptive power. God became a being so removed in character from sinful men that a working connection between Him and them could only be maintained through various grades of angelic beings, partly divine, partly human. Paul dealt with these aberrations in his characteristic fashion, not so much by direct attack as by setting forth a clearer and simpler religious philosophy. They had been redeemed solely through Christ, through whom therefore they would reach complete salvation. In view of His exalted power there is no need of intermediate beings. Through Him they had become dead to their old world and born again into a new life with renewed and sanctified wills. By the earnest exercise of this new life they would come to realize its possibilities of character and knowledge.

The two letters, to the Colossians and to the Ephesians, are very similar. They must have been written at the same time. The former centers attention upon the unique divinity of Christ in contrast to any other so-called heavenly beings; the latter emphasizes the majesty of the church of which Christ is the Head.

Colossians begins, like the other epistles, with a salutation and an expression of thankfulness for the fruitfulness of their lives (1:1-8). Paul then declares his passionate desire that they should pattern after Christ, the Head of the church, the summation of all things, Reconciler of the world to God. This "mystery" it was his privilege to preach that all men might lay hold on God. For its realization by men he longed (2:1-5). He warns them against a false philosophy, declaring that through Christ men are born into a new life (2:6-15). Over such a life ordinances can have no influence (2:16-23). The Christian should seek heavenly things, as those risen with Christ (3:1-4). Sensuality, malice and the like should be put away and the full Christian

life be lived (3:5-17). Prayerfulness, practical good sense and grace of speech are worth cultivating (4:2-6).

The letter to the Ephesians takes as its keynote association with Christ "in the heavenlies." The salutation is from Paul alone. The latter begins with a stately invocation to God who has adopted us as children, redeemed us through the Son, and sealed us through the Spirit. For those who are loyal to Christ there ought to be a steady enlightenment until they realize the greatness of His power and His real place in the moral universe (ch. 1). Made alive again by Him the Christian should rise to live with Him, a citizen of heaven, a part of God's holy temple. That Gentiles have this possibility is the real "mystery" of the ages, now known to all (3:1-13). In view of these things let every Christian crave a knowledge of Christ's love and a religious life with dimensions (3:14-21). There is a loving unity which is made up of variety, the body composed of different members. Let each member do its proper part. Put away heathen vices and put on the "new man" (4:17-24). This means right relations with those with whom one deals (4:25-32). He who follows after Christ abhors immorality or covetousness. He is a child of the light (5:1-14). He makes wise use of the world; his heart is full of praise and reverence (5:15-21). The relation of husband and wives, of children and parents, of slaves and masters, should be conditioned on their common relationship to Christ (5:22—6:9). In the earnest fight against evil which every one must wage, let the Christian make use of every spiritual weapon and go on to victory (6:10-20).

The great ideas of these letters are the unquestionable supremacy of Christ over all creation, material as well as spiritual, the unity of the church with Christ as its Head, the importance of remaining with Him "in the heavenlies," and the desirableness of aiming at fulness of experience and all-roundedness of attainment.

**Chapter 47. Paul's Missionary Career, as Told by Himself. Selections from Philippians, written about A.D. 62; and from 1 Timothy, written about A.D. 66.**

There are not a few scholars who think that Paul was never set free from the first Roman imprisonment. More take the view that the second letter to Timothy was written from Rome during a second short imprisonment following several years of freedom. The question is perplexing, and may never be laid at rest, in the absence of decisive data. In either case Paul's effective missionary career terminated with his incarceration at Rome for the first time, and we may appropriately review that course of development, aided by his own declarations.

The great apostle was notable for delicacy of feeling and self-forgetfulness. Nothing was less natural to him than to review his own achievements. But he was also a man who demanded fair play. Traduced by his cowardly opponents, who delighted to decry and accuse him behind his back, he was led, at various times, to defend his own good name by recounting the labors and perils which had been his. Not infrequently, like every good leader, he surveyed the results of his unselfish warfare as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. More often still he alluded in passing to the methods and motives, the obstacles and joys of his career. From these we can reconstruct with assurance the principles of his active ministry.

His apostolate, he repeatedly declared, originated with the Lord Jesus, who had appeared unto him (1 Cor. 15:8), had commissioned him to his apostolic work (Gal. 1:1; Rom. 1:5) and had revealed to him his Gospel (Gal. 1:12). Bidden to work among the Gentiles (Gal. 1:16; Rom. 1:5; 15:16; Eph. 3:8; 1 Tim. 2:7), not alone by God (Acts 26:16-20), but also by the Three (Gal. 2:9), he carried on for upwards of twenty years with noteworthy success an evangelizing campaign in Syria, Cilicia, Galatia,

Macedonia, Greece and Asia, which had resulted in the founding of Christian churches in all these regions (Rom. 15:18, 19).

Paul was a natural pioneer. He was attracted by the problem of organizing and developing churches in new communities. He aimed to go to unevangelized regions (Rom. 15:20) where he might lay broad foundations (1 Cor. 3:6, 10; Rom. 15:23). It seemed to him when he wrote at Corinth to the church at Rome that he had actually completed the work which he could best do in the countries bordering the eastern end of the Mediterranean (Rom. 15:23). Paul had unbounded faith in the self-sustaining and self-propagating power of Christianity when once established. He therefore bent his energies toward making strong beginnings.

He did not, however, neglect these churches, when once they were founded. He carried them, individually and collectively, on his heart (2 Cor. 11:28). He received letters from them and wrote carefully in return. He kept close watch of their growth, and maintained relations of deep affection with their leaders.

When we heed his own words regarding himself, we would not rate him as a learned or eloquent speaker, although an impressive one (1 Cor. 2:1, 4; 2 Cor. 10:10). His personal presence was, perhaps, inferior (2 Cor. 10:1, 10). It was his capacity, his great enthusiasm, his deep earnestness, his sympathy and resourcefulness, that gave him such power over men. He was ready of speech, beyond question, and perhaps over modest in referring to his own oratorical powers.

It was a matter of principle with Paul to identify himself with all types of men, to reach them, as far as he could consistently do so, at their level (1 Cor. 9:20-23; 10:32, 33). Yet he could boast on occasion of a splendid lineage (2 Cor. 11:22; Phil. 3:4-6). He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, a cultured aristocrat. But his proudest boast was, after all, that in course of time God drew him from that life of holy

selfishness on which he had embarked, and made him a preacher of the "mystery" of Christ. In comparison with this no other experience seemed a privilege. He bent his energies to the work of preaching, leaving details of church procedure or of the instruction of the converts whom he made to others (1 Cor. 1:17). His ministry was frank and outspoken. He dealt with his converts as a father (1 Cor. 4:15; 1 Thes. 2:7, 10-12) might, with all gentleness and consideration, and yet with authority. He seems to have taught them rules of right conduct (1 Cor. 11:2), and discussed the proprieties of many habits. Inasmuch as his converts came in large proportion from among the poor and ignorant, not a few being slaves, who were not credited with even a rudimental morality, such instruction was necessary (1 Thes. 4:1). Paul never hesitated to declare plainly what he felt the situation demanded (1 Thes. 2:4-6; 2 Cor. 4:2).

Paul's career had not been an easy one. From the first day he met with trouble (Acts 9:23). As an evangelist he passed through experiences which would have broken down or silenced any ordinary man (1 Cor. 15:32; 16:9; 2 Cor. 7:5), but they seemed to a man of his splendid idealism but incentives to more incessant endeavor (2 Cor. 4:8, 9, 16-18). With the utmost difficulty was he forced to mention them. They read like the adventurous experiences of intrepid pioneers. Paul constantly ventured on behalf of the Gospel all that men have ever been willing to hazard for the heaping up of treasure or for the gratification of lust. The long roll which in various connections he rehearses (1 Thes. 2:2; 1 Cor. 4:11-13; 2 Cor. 1:8, 9; 6:4-10; 11:23-28; 2 Tim. 2:9; 3:10, 11; 4:7) merely gives us a glimpse of his hardihood, persistence, courage and faith.

It was like Paul to wish to be beholden to no one. He never would levy on a community, as some of his contemporaries did. Gifts for his personal use, which came under the promptings of love and not as salary



he did not refuse (2 Cor. 11:8, 9; Phil. 1:5; 4:15, 16), but he wished to have the independence and the satisfaction involved in paying his own way (2 Thes. 3:7, 8; 1 Cor. 9:15).

The apostle had so sane and well-balanced a mind that his declarations about the revelations which he had received (2 Cor. 12:1-4) arouse a sort of surprise. We agree with him that the "thorn" (Gal. 4:13; 6:17; 2 Cor. 12:7) was well bestowed. At all costs so great and noble, so sweet and fine a soul must be kept humble.

Paul's strength lay in his absolute loyalty to Christ. Every power was controlled and subordinated to His service. With whole-heartedness he did his work, with resistless and incessant energy. In this work God gradually gave him such a revelation of Himself as few men can gain. It will be ever true that the real disciple finds power and vision, as Paul found it, in self-forgetting zeal for God.

**Chapter 48. The Close of Paul's Career. Selections from 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. About A. D. 64—68.**

The details of Paul's last days are very obscure and concerning them there is no unanimity of opinion. The majority of interpreters in the past have followed the lead of Lightfoot in attributing the Pastoral Epistles to a period subsequent to the two years in confinement at Rome of which the Book of Acts speaks (28:30). The few allusions to persons and places in these epistles then suggest a release from imprisonment, a year or two of visitation of churches and a second arrest and imprisonment at Rome, this time terminating fatally. There are scholars of good judgment, such as Bartlet, who regard First Timothy and Titus as having been written prior to the imprisonment mentioned in Acts, and deny that they furnish any evidence regarding Paul's movements in later years. The allusions in Second Timothy would fit into either scheme.

Other arguments are singularly inconclusive in relation to this matter. The Book of Acts as a whole, in the decisions or declarations of Lysias, Felix, Festus and Agrippa, that Paul was not worthy of death or of bonds, would seem to anticipate his release from the charge made against him. Yet his words at Miletus (Acts 20:17 ff.) imply also that he was not to look upon his friends at Ephesus again. Paul's great confidence that he was to be quickly released, given expression near the close of the two years of imprisonment (Philemon 22; Phil. 1:25; 2:24), counts for something as an indication of the course of events; yet a great and sudden surprise would not have seemed a strange happening at that time.

The reference in the First Epistle of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians, dated about a generation after Paul's death, which declares that he "reached the goal of the West," is too obscure to be regarded as valuable evidence in regard to his movements. It may be merely rhetoric

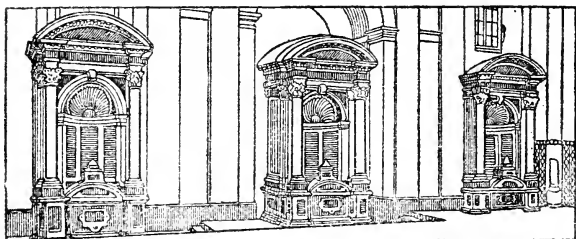
or it may refer, in its context, merely to Rome. It is necessary, therefore, that no dogmatic assertions be made.

For all practical purposes Paul's life was over. Even if he was released and returned to the East he made no protracted stay in any place. Possibly he went at once to Spain, as Zahn conjectures. Probably he would have spent some time at and near Ephesus and with the churches near Colosse. Surely he would not have overlooked the Macedonian churches, for which he had such an affection. The church at Corinth would, perhaps, have been the very first of all to be visited. While thus renewing the faith and stimulating the courage of these beloved communities in Christian fellowship, he must have been once more apprehended and taken to Rome for the last time.

The uncertainty whether the great apostle was beheaded about A. D. 62 or 63, or several years later does not prevent our having a fairly vivid idea of the circumstances under which his last days were spent. We may be sure that he maintained his courage to the very last. The long imprisonment at Rome was a bitter disappointment to him. The emperor Nero in the earlier part of his reign was regarded by his far distant subjects in the East as a model ruler. The palace intrigues and family murders of which we hear hardly affected their interests, which were directed in large measure by Seneca and Burrus. Probably Paul, when he appealed to Cæsar, expected to receive quick and genuine justice. He knew that the flimsy character of the charges against him would be evident to any impartial judge of last resort, and expected a prompt decision in his favor. On the supposition that the letter to Titus was written by him on the voyage to Rome after leaving Crete, perhaps from Malta, Paul's expectation (Titus 3:12) of spending the next winter at Nicopolis would indicate his supposition that his trial would be speedy and favorable. After his usual fashion he made good use of the opportunities afforded by his contact with the guards and by his freedom of intercourse with citizens. Yet as the

months went by there was a growing sense of injustice and danger which would have sapped the energies of a less heroic personality. To the last he was the most dependable of all.

So strong was his faith, and so keenly did he feel the continuing need of his presence among his followers, that he could say to the Philippians, "And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide, yea, and abide with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith." He had so many plans, and could meet so many emergencies and so



*From a photograph.*

### **The Three Fountains.**

The Church of the Three Fountains is said to mark the spot where Paul was executed. The tradition is that when his head was stricken from his body it bounded twice, thus striking the ground in three places, at each of which a fountain of water appeared. These fountains are under the altars in the cut. At the right is seen the executioner's block on which the great apostle is said to have been executed. Few of the places shown in Rome as memorials of Paul have any historical basis. The fact that they should be visited in reverent interest by thousands of people every year shows the wonderful influence which this greatest of Christian disciples still exerts in the world.

much land still remained to be possessed that he could not bring himself to feel until the very end that his life was actually over.

How he carried the burden of the churches is evinced by the character of the letters written at this last stage of his life. The letters to the Colossians, to the Ephesians, to the Philippians and the Pastorals, are essentially letters to the church at large, dealing with its insistent problems, inculcating the true principles of Christian faith and life, breathing tender yet inspiring messages of assurance and comfort and conviction. Through these marvelous letters Paul did the culminating work of his long and active career. In a true sense

the determination of the question of one imprisonment at Rome or two may be regarded as unimportant. His work had really come to a fitting end.

There came a sudden turn in his fortunes. His last hope of justice fled. He knew that he had no longer any hope of deliverance. That presentation to God of the Gentile world as inheritors of His gracious promises, which was the great task of his life, was now, as he wrote to his beloved Timothy, to be accompanied as a sacrificial gift by his own blood "poured out as a libation" (Phil. 2:17 in anticipation; 2 Tim. 4:6).

But with what superb self-command he awaited the lictor's axe. It was "for the testimony of Jesus" (Rev. 20:4) and thus to die was gain (Phil. 1:21). His death was triumphant. No emperor's decree could set aside the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, would grant him. He had fought a good fight; he had kept the faith.

Paul's life has been a continuing inspiration to all who seek to make the utmost use in the Lord's service of such powers as they possess. Clement of Rome, about 95 A. D., referred to Paul, who by his example pointed out the prize of patient endurance. After that he had been seven times in bonds, had been driven into exile, had been stoned, had preached in the East and in the West, he won the noble renown which was the reward of his faith, having taught righteousness unto the whole world and borne testimony before the rulers. The lesson which we draw to-day is not dissimilar. Paul succeeded against great disadvantages because of his singlemindedness, his devotion and his faith. He was truly "God's man."

**Chapter 49. The Last Words of Peter on Behalf of the Church. Selections from 1 and 2 Peter. Dates uncertain.**

It is with a sense of loss that the student of early Christian history comes to realize that so little is recorded in the New Testament regarding the last fifteen years or so of the active life of the apostle Peter. That he was not in retirement may be taken for granted, not merely because of his temperament, but as evidenced by the allusion made by Paul to his journeyings in First Corinthians 9:5. It must have been his custom to make long tours of apostolic visitation and presumably in Asia Minor.

Even before the conference at Jerusalem (not far from 50 A. D.) James had become the acknowledged



**St. Peter.**

From a statue in the church of St. John Lateran, in Rome.

head of the church in Judea, so that Peter's duty no less than his natural bent would have taken him out among the churches. It had doubtless seemed to him and to the others at that time (Gal. 2:9) that a natural distribution of energy would send Paul to those who were distinctively Gentiles, and Peter to those who were by birth and training Jews. As years went by, however, we cannot imagine Peter as continuing on a narrow basis. He was

"ever sensitive," as Bartlet remarks, "to the teaching of divine facts," and the unquestioned success of the work of Paul and the rapid growth of the churches under his inspiring leadership would have quickly evi-

denced to Peter the real breadth of the Messianic kingdom-to-be. Tradition connects Peter rather with Pauline than with later Palestinian Christianity.

Where Peter labored all these years must be a matter of conjecture. Doubtless he worked in Palestine and Syria and perhaps up through Asia Minor as far as Pontus and Bithynia. He was surely well known in the other Christian centers, at least Paul refers familiarly to him, when writing to his own churches.

The evidence of the First Epistle of Peter as well as that of tradition makes it probable that Peter came to Rome after Paul's martyrdom and was there beheaded. Whether he was at Rome only a year or two, and wrote First Peter not far from 80 A. D. must ever remain one of the perplexities of interpretation. One who reads the epistle carefully recognizes the stamp of a first-rate personality. No other book, not written by Paul, so nearly resembles his writings. It is wholly worthy of the other great pillar of Christianity, and may be with strong probability ascribed to him.

First Peter was written from "Babylon," probably meaning the Rome which had begun to persecute the church. It was addressed to the Christian communities of Asia Minor north of the Taurus range, because a similar sort of persecuting policy had been begun among them. The apostle sought to send them a message of comfort and cheer, as a stimulus to their courage and a stay to their faith. He addresses independent communities, each with its elders (5:1), its sense of brotherhood (4:10), its personal freedom (4:11), and puts his plea on the broad ground of the wisdom of righteous and sincere lives.

We know but little about the churches addressed, and the way in which they came to be organized. Ramsay makes it an argument for the relatively late date of the first epistle that Christianity could not well have gotten a strong hold of the region of Pontus and Bithynia as early as A. D. 64. We hear of the region many years later through the interesting rescript of Pliny to the

emperor Trajan. Pliny was proprætor of these provinces between A. D. 103 and A. D. 105. He had to deal with Christians and asked the emperor for advice. Incidentally his letter proves that Christianity had at that time made great progress, including "many of every age, of every rank, of both sexes also . . . in country towns and rural districts" as well as cities, so that the temples, once thronged, were almost deserted.

First Peter was probably directed to the converts of a generation earlier. It is addressed in figurative fashion to the "elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion," identifying thus these Christian believers with the true Israel of God, and suggests that they are elected to complete holiness and purity of life. Then follows a thanksgiving (1:3-5) for the heavenly inheritance reserved for those who have triumphant faith. Such faith (1:6-9), even though tested severely, is sustained by love for the unseen Christ, whose sufferings and glory (1:10-12) prophets foretold. As those redeemed by the blood of Christ unto a new spiritual life (1:13-25) may you all with soberness aim to live holy lives. Put away everything which will retard your growth (2:1, 2), or make you unfit to fashion with Christ a holy temple (2:3-10).

This glorious introduction leads the way to a series of exhortations to duty. As true pilgrims (2:11, 12) they were to avoid all impurity or cause for criticism. As loyal subjects of the government (2:13-17) they were to be obedient and thus put calumniators to silence. Slaves (2:18-20) were to be obedient and patient even under wrong, in imitation of the wonderful patience (2:21-25) of Christ. Wives were not to use their Christian freedom as an excuse for discontent or extravagance (3:1-6). Husbands were to love and honor their wives (3:7). All should seek to exhibit the qualities which make for brotherhood and blessing (3:8-12). If tribulation seemed imminent, let it be for righteousness and never deserved (3:13-17). Christ Himself was not free



from suffering, but it was because of the sins of others and for their salvation (3:18-20). Through His resurrection and ascension all obtain a right relationship with God (3:21, 22). As sharers then with Christ in sufferings, share with Him the life of God and abandon the old heathenish practices (4:1-6). In view of the approaching end of the age, let all give themselves soberly and reverently to prayer and mutual friendliness and helpful deeds, each one contributing his best (4:7-11).

The writer now reaches the real reason for his writing. His readers were not to wonder at the trials they were experiencing, nor to resent them, but rather to rejoice at suffering with Christ and exalting His precious name. To suffer as a criminal would be scandalous; to suffer as a Christian would be glorious (4:12-17).

He closes with a few charges. First the elders of the church (5:1-4) are to take great pains to be good pastors and leaders. Again the younger members (5:5) are to be obedient and helpful. And all are to exhibit the virtues of humility, alertness, trust, soberness and steadfastness (5:6-9). God Himself would help them to a perfect development (5:10, 11).

It is interesting to note the emphasis laid upon the sufferings of Jesus in this epistle, doubtless because it was addressed to those who were in the midst of serious trouble. He urges that their sufferings, like those of the Master, make for redemption. To be worthy of the rich inheritance which is theirs is their privilege and duty.

Second Peter is a much disputed epistle, and a truly remarkable one. It differs much from First Peter in style and in thought, but seems to have incorporated Jude almost entire. Many question the Petrine authorship, yet the unknown author was a remarkable man. It begins with an appeal for progress in acquiring Christian virtues (1:3-11) and a noble declaration of the truth of Christian teaching (1:12-21). The second chapter sets forth the evil practices of the false

prophets. The closing one extends a rebuke to those who disbelieve in the final judgment and declares that the coming of the Lord will be sudden and sweeping. Consequently all are urged to be patient, diligent, and full of sincerity.

We cannot go far afield if we think of Peter as the true spiritual successor of Paul, for a while at least. He was quite possibly the chief administrator in the western church; he surely became, like Paul, a cheerful martyr to the faith. As Clement of Rome says, "He endured, not one or two, but many labors, and having borne his testimony, went to his appointed place of glory."

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**Chapter 50. The Apocalyptic Vision of the Triumphant Christ. Rev. chs. 4, 5; 7:9—17. About A. D. 68.**

It is rather strange that there are so few examples of apocalypse in the Bible, and particularly in the New Testament, when it was such a frequent and favorite type of literature during the centuries just preceding and that including the early days of Christianity. Among the books which Christians read, apocalypses were often found, such as the Book of Enoch, or the Apocalypse of Peter. They were always couched in strange, symbolic language, and purported to unveil the mysteries of the past or future. They were a revival of prophecy but not of the old sort. They looked for a judgment, not upon Israel but upon the foreign nations, her enemies; they paid little or no attention to the life of their time, but directed it toward the universe at large; they described the Messianic or ideal future as something not to be realized in this sphere but in a heavenly world; they paid scant attention to Israel the nation, and much to the individual inheritor of God's promises.

Apocalyptical writings are really aids to robust faith.

They arise in times of danger, when active persecution threatens to cause widespread apostasy, when heathenism is rampant and all believers must get together. They make for encouragement and for hopefulness by emphasizing the factors which stand for righteousness and by asserting that these will be made manifest.

The least profitable method of studying an apocalypse is to dwell upon the details of its bold imagery. It is full of figurative representations of spiritual realities. The faith and hope behind them are important, rather than the symbols themselves. Its interpretation is in the large rather than minutely.



**St. John.**

From a statue by Thorwaldsen.

The book of Revelation predicts the speedy coming of God as judge, to divide true Christians from the false. "Rome will fall and Satan, whose power Rome embodies, will first be bound and then destroyed." All believers will finally live with God and Christ in eternal blessedness. Amidst the profusion of figurative expression, it is clear that two definite declarations are made: that the Roman empire is to fall, and that the faithful Christian will receive a power and blessedness far beyond any conception of human experience.

Its great themes are the transcendence of God and the certainty that His purposes will prevail in the history of the world. Through the risen and enthroned Christ He overcomes and redeems.

The first chapter is introductory. The superscription (1:1-3) ascribes the revelation to Christ and declares

that its contents are of high importance. The introduction (1:4-8) asserts the coming of Christ as the theme of the book, which goes on to describe the commission of the prophet, given by the eternal Christ Himself, to write down what was revealed unto him (1:9-20). Then follow, still by way of preliminary, the well-known letters to the seven churches of Asia, to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. Each receives approval, recognition or reproach according to its desert. They are really addressed, in all probability, to a wider circle, perhaps to the Christian world of that day. It is unlikely that these churches ever actually received them individually. The writer's purpose seems to be ideal. The letters form an appropriate introduction to the book as a whole. These letters give a vivid picture of the Christian church of that day, its victories and defeats. The church at Ephesus was a firm upholder of the faith, but had lost some of its early spirit of brotherly love. Those at Smyrna and Pergamum were praised for fidelity in the face of persecution and difficulty. At Thyatira was a church exhibiting Christian growth but blamed for permitting the presence of a false prophetess. Sardis was mainly dead. Philadelphia was faithful and would be rewarded. Laodicea abounded in wealth but was really in spiritual want. Those churches needed a stirring message to arouse them to confidence in God.

Chapter 4 exhibits God upon His throne, surrounded by the heavenly chorus, and worshiped by the angelic leaders as the Supreme Creator and Ruler of the universe. Chapter 5 introduces the Christ, who is able to unlock the secrets of heaven and earth, in whose praise the whole creation joins. Thus these two chapters describe the heavenly scene of the visions.

The next three chapters introduce a vision of the judgments to come. The destroying power of war, famine, pestilence, earthquake, all portend the day of the Lord (ch. 6). The seventh is the worst of all, but before it are two comforting visions of the safety and

blessedness of those who are faithful. Some are kept from the evil (7:1-8); others come through it triumphantly (7:9-17). This last passage anticipates chapter 21, but prevents dismay. The seventh seal involves a series of preliminary judgments. One-third of the earth is destroyed and one-third of mankind (chs. 8, 9).

With chapter 10 the prophet is given a new commission to prophesy in place of the description of the result of the seventh trumpet. This account is followed by a short and obscure passage of comfort for those who keep the faith (11:3-13), which is followed by a heavenly song of anticipated victory (11:16-19).

The powers of evil against whom these forces are to wage successful war are then introduced. First is Satan himself, the personification of all wickedness, desirous of destroying the Messiah-child, but when foiled turning with renewed fury against the faithful Christians who were His followers (ch. 12). Satan gives his malign authority to a beast, which exercise offensive and oppressive dominion over men and especially over believers (13:3-10). A second beast appears which compels all men to worship the first (13:11-18). By these beasts sober minded interpreters understand the Roman empire of the days of Domitian and the system of emperor-worship, which constituted Christianity's great danger. Over against these foes stands a comforting vision of Christ and His great array of pure-minded followers. To further stay the courage of those who were to pass through fiery trials a series of warnings are uttered by heavenly messengers who proclaim the glory and supremacy of God the Creator (14:6, 7), the fall of Rome (14:8,) the doom of those who yield to Rome's behest (14:9-12), the blessedness of the faithful dead (14:13), and the certain judgments to come (14:14-20).

Then is poured out the seven-fold wrath of God (chs. 15, 16), preceded as before by a glimpse of the heavenly blessedness of the redeemed who have shown their fidelity (15:2-4). The wrath of God is in seven bowls,

which are poured out one by one, against the earth, the sea, the fresh waters, the sun, the throne of the beast, the Euphrates, and the air.

These outpourings of wrath prepare the way for the overthrow of the powers of evil. First of all is Rome, the harlot-city, red with the blood of martyrs, seated on her seven hills, doomed to destruction from within (ch. 17). Angels announce her destruction and desolation, because of her sins (18:1-8). Those who trafficked with her are overwhelmed with grief (18:9-19), but saints will rejoice at her well-deserved downfall (18:20-24). And in heaven and on earth there is one loud acclaim of praise to God because of the overthrow (19:1-10). Then the warrior Messiah in blood-red garments executes the wrath of God and puts a final end to the beasts and to all who followed them (19:11-21), *i. e.*, to the Roman empire and its godless worship.

With the fall of the wicked empire, his tool, Satan is, as it were, deprived of freedom for a time (20:1-3). During it the resurrected martyrs share with Christ in ruling the world (20:4-6). When loosed Satan will vainly gather his hosts. They shall be consumed and he doomed eternally along with the two beasts (20:7-10). Then will come the final judgment of all mankind (20:11-15).

For those who have been worthy, who have persevered amidst temptations and persecutions, a new and blessed life now begins. The heaven and earth becomes new (21:1, 2). God and man dwell together (21:3, 4). The heavenly city, the abode of the blest, is inconceivably beautiful, bright and pure. Life there is joyful beyond expression (21:9—22:5). God is always there, and His people will be in fellowship with Him.

The closing verses emphasize the importance and the certainty of the visions of the book.

Revelation is a wonderful book. Its imagery is almost confusing when studied in close detail, but very effective when interpreted broadly. Its message of assurance bases itself on the power and wisdom of God, whose

plans for the universe must finally prevail. Its promises are to those who are spiritually faithful and worthy.

Those who seek to find in its words an unveiling of the details of the historical or even spiritual future will be disappointed. Those who look for encouragement in the sturdy resistance of all forms of evil, in the maintenance of a serene faith in God, in the conquest of self, and in the acceptance, if need be, of martyrdom rather than apostasy, find an eternal message.

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**Chapter 51. The Last Messages of the Apostolic Age.**  
**Selections from 1 John. Written apparently between**  
**A. D. 80 and 100.**

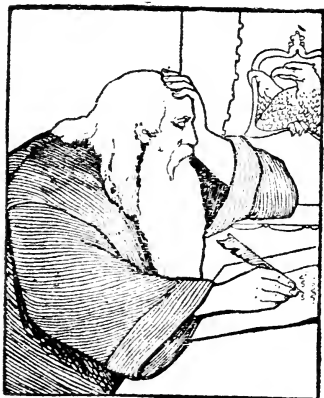
There can be no question that the writings ascribed by common consent to the aged apostle John belong to the very last decade of the first century of our era. In what exact proportion, if at all, others than the apostle shared in these writings will always be a theme of scholarly discussion, but of comparatively small importance. It is certain that for all practical purposes these noble writings represent the thoughts and utterances of that aged saint of Ephesus, whose whole life had been given to the bearing of witness to the Word whom he had seen and known, had loved and served.

The closing decade of the century was a time of comparative peace for the Christian congregations. The persecuting movement of Domitian's early reign had spent itself. The dangers to which the leaders of the church were alive came from within the church rather than from the outside. There were serious forms of unbelief or speculative heresy which had begun to gain ground. Prominent among these was the Cerinthian view of the person of Jesus Christ. Claiming that divinity and humanity were so opposite

in substance that no one could possibly be God and man at the same time, Cerinthus, who accepted the current traditions regarding the active life of Jesus, explained the supernatural element in that life by the hypothesis that the man Jesus was taken possession of at the baptism by the spiritual Christ, who remained with Him until the cross. This spiritual Christ, not

being corporeal or human, could not suffer, and had no part in the agony of the cross.

This ingenious theory had the practical result of absolutely denying the divinity of Jesus Christ. It roused the aged apostle to the necessity for a deliberate and comprehensive reply. This we have from one point of view in the first epistle of John and from another in the fourth Gospel.



**St. John, the Last of the Apostles.**

They are impressive presentations of the personality and the work of Jesus Christ.

The first epistle of John contains the substance of every important declaration in the other two. It begins with an impressive formulation (1:1-4) of the theme which he wished to treat, viz., the reality of the living Word and His possible continuing relationship with men. Fellowship with Him means (1:5-10) walking in the light and confessing one's sins. Jesus delivers from sin those who strive constantly to follow Him (2:1-6). He who loves God loves his brother man (2:7-11), and ranks God above all else (2:12-17). As our Lord declared and as Paul said also, these men whom we know, who are denying that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, these antichrists are only fore-



runners of the day of His appearing. Remain faithful to Him and thus show that you are indeed His children (2:18-29). As children, let us be pure and righteous and loving (3:1-12). Loving one another in truth, let us believe on Jesus (3:13-24). The spirit of anti-christ is worldly (4:1-6); the spirit which God inspires is a spirit of love (4:7-21). He who knows and follows Christ is a true child of God (5:1-12). These things we *know* (5:13-21).

The letter is a testimony to the reality and power of the fundamental facts of the Gospel message. These facts, however, are set forth with much greater fulness in the Gospel of John. Whether this Gospel was written before or after the first epistle is uncertain, but it looks at Christ's life from the same point of view, and was probably one of the latest of the New Testament writings. Its purpose was not evangelistic, like that of the other Gospels, but like John's epistles, was for the establishment and confirmation of Christians in the faith.

This Gospel is an interpretation rather than a record of the life of Jesus. So far as it is a narrative, it details the self-revelation of Jesus—to His companions, to the people, to the Eleven in the upper room, and finally to human-kind. It sets forth the inner life and the genuine spirit of Jesus as exhibited in His dealings with men and His declarations to them. Just as Matthew lays great stress upon the year of gradual self-disclosure between the choosing of the Twelve and the affirmation by Peter on their behalf that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God, so the fourth Gospel details the less obvious, more gradual self-disclosure of the life as a whole. It begins by setting forth Christ's eternal nature as the Word made flesh, the true Light of the world, the One who revealed God unto men by exhibiting in Himself at once the perfection of human nature and the substance of the divine nature. It then shows how Christ presented Himself to the nation, claiming over and

over again His divine sonship, and affording the most complete proof of the truth of what He said, notwithstanding which He was utterly rejected by the Jews. Beginning with the thirteenth chapter, it describes Christ's unreserved revelation of Himself to the inner circle of disciples who were now prepared for the precious message. The book closes with the account of His crucifixion and burial, and His triumphant resurrection through which His disciples were made certain of His real character.

It was thus a noble message to be given to the church as its particular Gospel, a fitting word for the close of the New Testament age, a cure for those who had begun to be affected by doubts regarding the true divinity of our Lord, or whose faith was formal, unvital, chilly. For all these centuries it has served to quicken, to cheer, to assure, to deepen and to establish the spiritual life of every earnest servant of God. In writing it the beloved apostle rendered the church a service of inconceivable value.

**Chapter 52. The Later Apostolic Age. A Review.**

The imprisonment of the apostle Paul at Cæsarea marked the beginning of the second Christian generation. It was far more of a turning point in Christian history than has been commonly supposed. The first thirty years of Christian history were years of activity and movement, of pioneering and organization, of the discovery or awakening of needs rather than of their satisfaction. Paul's long imprisonment not only gave him an opportunity for reflection, and a consequent maturing of his thought, but it accentuated the feeling all over the Christian world that the earlier era had come to a close and that the second generation had begun.

The next three decades registered a great advance for Christianity. During the first of these Jerusalem rapidly approached its doom. The relations of people and procurators grew less and less endurable on either side; the signs of a revolt became increasingly definite. At last, after several years of tumult and torture, the sacred city of Jewry was captured, the temple destroyed, and the people scattered. The strength of Judaism was broken.

Meanwhile Christianity had suffered and achieved. Paul, in prison, had written those matchless epistles, which forever uphold the supremacy and the satisfying character of Christ, and declare His significance. Later on He had laid down His noble life in martyrdom. But He had first inspired a church to heroism and faithfulness. There was rapid progress everywhere. Churches sprang up on every hand; they endured and even flourished in spite of danger. Not even the bitter persecution encouraged by the emperor, Nero, was a check to the Christian church; it rather became a stimulus. The disaster of A. D. 70 did not hinder Christianity, although it was deeply mourned by many Christians who had been born Jews.

Not long before the fall of Jerusalem the Gospel of

Mark was written. It represented most closely the sifted tradition regarding the active life of Jesus. Either shortly before or after that notable date the Gospel of Matthew likewise appeared, at least in substance. It was such a Gospel as was greatly needed at that juncture, when such a multitude of Jews had been shaken to the very foundation of their faith by the terrible disasters which they had endured and by the fate of the temple which seemed to them the very abode of God. Such minds had rejected Jesus because He had not proven Himself to be of the Messianic type for which they had looked. The Gospel appealed to such men. It traced the actual fulfilment of Messianic expectation as seen in the life of Jesus. It reported His repeated declaration that suffering and sympathy were essential elements in Messiahship. It emphasized the glory and the triumph of the cross and the sublime range of His last command. Such an epistle as that to the Hebrews reinforced the thought of Matthew by showing that the New Testament reality far outvalued the Old Testament practice, while embodying all in it that was truly valuable.

These writings were the products of the second generation of thinking. They represent a more reflective age and a maturity of judgment which gave to them increased value. The Lukan writings, which probably appeared about 80 A. D., are fine examples of this maturity. As Bruce has remarked, it is not the active Jesus who is the theme of the third Gospel, but the Lord Jesus Christ. By this he means that Luke attempted to sketch the life of Jesus in its permanent rather than its passing aspects. It is certainly true, as the careful reader does not fail to realize, that the book of Acts is anything but a record of current events. Such a diary was among its sources but the book itself is a well digested, carefully arranged example of literature written with a dominant purpose and using historical facts for its illustrations. Whether First Peter and Revelation belong to the era between

60 and 80 A. D., or to a later time, must be uncertain. Very likely First Peter is relatively early and Revelation relatively late, but the determination is unimportant. Each belonged to the literature of encouragement and comfort, of which there was sore need, both in the days of Nero and in the days of Domitian.

The work of Paul for each generation, that which witnessed the founding of the church and that which formulated the place of the church and its work, was equally important. He was one of the personalities which grow greater as they are the more clearly understood. The deliberateness of his heroism, the clearness of his intellect, the greatness of his soul, the sincerity of his judgments, the extent of his influence, and its helpfulness—

these qualities become increasingly impressive to the student of Paul's career. He triumphed by a wonderful combination of genius and straightforward sincerity over obstacles which would have baffled ordinary great men. He was a leader among men of strength, not merely in default of other aggressive personalities. He was not free from mistakes; he laid

stress on some matters with regard to which the Christian thought of to-day is at variance; he certainly used many arguments which were good when he used them, but are unconvincing now, yet he laid broad, strong and square the essential foundation for a working Christianity which should be truly



**St. Paul.**

**St. Peter.**

From a medallion in the Vatican library at Rome, which is supposed to date from about 200 A. D., and probably presents the earliest existing portraits of these two great apostles.

universal. No other one personality was so important as his in the history of the early church.

The work of Peter was hardly less useful. In saying this we must trust in part to tradition, for our New Testament records follow the work of Paul rather than of Peter. The latest Gospels sketch, however, a Peter who would surely be at the forefront of the apostolic care of the churches. Despite the rebuke administered by Paul to his colleague because of his vacillation at Antioch (Gal. ch. 2), there was ever a cordial and fraternal feeling on Paul's part for Peter. When the barriers between the Gentile portion of the church and the Judaistic portion had broken down, we may fairly suppose that Peter was active in the superintendency and visitation of the churches at large. The tradition which credits him during the silent years with active work in Asia Minor is wholly probable. The tradition which declares that his closing years were spent at Rome, strengthening and developing the church in that region and serving as the generally acknowledged leader of the church in all the world is exaggerated, but based on probability. There can be little doubt that he died at Rome, and that he was influential over a wide area. That he became a virtual pope is without any historical confirmation.

He could not have wielded any universal authority, derived upon a general organization of the church into a unity. The early church followed its leaders, but it was sectional. At a comparatively early period in the second century the churches of Alexandria, Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, Northern Africa, and Rome, were distinguishable. Each group cherished its independence, and followed its particular group of prelates or scholars. This independence was inherent in the conditions under which the churches were founded, and affected the history of the church from earliest times.

Within the first century it only remains to notice the place occupied by the venerable apostle John. Long

after the others had passed away, he remained a living link between the days of the Lord's active ministry and the rapidly growing Christian church. We can but faintly conjecture the pride and affection and respect which he inspired. It was of no little significance to the church that he was spared to say the last word of the eye witnesses of the events and ideas which lie at the basis of all Christian faith. No other testimony could have been as powerful on behalf of Christian certitude, obedience, character and ideals. No other human being could have made such a permanent contribution to our understanding of the real personality of Jesus. No one could have so decisively spoken the needed message for a church beset by doubts engendered by philosophical skepticism and by unemphatic morality. The aged yet clear-minded companion of Jesus was privileged to render his beloved Master the greatest service of all.

Thus the apostolic age came to a well-rounded end. The factors were not wanting to complete the record of the revelation of God through the Lord Jesus Christ, so that it should be adequate for every age. Through all these writings runs a golden thread of anticipation, a looking forward to the glad consummation of the age-long purposes of God. The "coming," as they hoped for it, has not yet taken place. Their message to us, as to their own generation is an exhortation to be alert and faithful, prepared in every way to welcome the Lord, should He appear. A great work yet remains before the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the whole earth, and all nations shall reverently call upon His name. These glorious men of God appeal to us, every one, each in our appointed way, to bend our energies to the hastening of this end.







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